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To: Children Families & Education Policy Overview Committee - 30 January 2008

Subject: The Draft Strategy for Early Education and Childcare

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This paper presents KCC's draft Strategy for Early Education and Childcare to Members of the CFE Policy Overview Committee and seeks views, as part of the consultation process, to inform its development.

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) The County Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all families can access high quality early education and childcare and that it has a key role to play in achieving this.

(2) The Government confirms the vital role that the Local Authority plays in improving the outcomes of all young children from birth up to the August following their fifth birthday and reducing inequalities between them through legislation set out in the Childcare Act 2006. This Act sets out the regulatory regime for the provision of early education and childcare.

(3) The draft strategy is one of a suite of strategies that has been developed by Kent County Council to improve the outcomes of all children from birth to 19.

## **The Development of the draft Early Years Strategy for Early Education and Childcare**

2. (1) In order to develop the draft strategy initial consultation has taken place with the Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board (EYCESB) and its four working groups. The Board includes representatives from:

- Kent County Council (A KCC Member and officers from Children, Families & Education, Communities and Environment and Regeneration)
- The Health Services
- The Learning and Skills Council
- National Childminding Association
- Jobcentre Plus
- Kent Schools (Cluster Chair)
- Pre-school Learning Alliance
- Kent Children's Centres.

(2) The draft strategy is set out at appendix one.

## **Consultation arrangements**

3. (1) Consultation on the draft strategy is taking place between 14 January and 4 April 2008. The consultation is extensive and aims to seek the views from the full range of stakeholders, including parents, early years providers, schools, agencies and strategic groups in Kent. Details of the stakeholders to be consulted and how this will be undertaken are attached at appendix two.

(2) As part of the consultation, stakeholders are being asked a series of questions in order to shape the final version of the strategy and identify priority areas. The consultation questions are set out at appendix three.

### **Next Steps**

4. (1) The consultation process will inform the development of the final version of the strategy with a view to this being formally adopted by the County Council during the autumn 2008.

### **Resources**

5. (1) Resources to implement the Strategy for Early Education and Childcare will be identified as part of:

- KCC budget planning and the setting of Directorate budgets.
- The commissioning of services through local Children Trust Boards.

(2) Government funding for the provision of early education and childcare is available through the:

- Designated Schools Grant (revenue)
- SureStart, Early Years and Childcare Grant (revenue)
- Early Years Capital Grant (capital).

### **Recommendations**

6. Members of the Children Families & Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

- (a) note the development of the draft strategy; and,
- (b) put forward views to inform the final version (Members are asked to include a focus on the questions raised in appendix three).

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*Background Documents:* None  
*Other Useful Information:* None



# The Strategy for Early Education and Childcare (2008 – 2013)

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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3. Key Plans & strategies
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8. The Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board (EYCESB)

Glossary of Terms

Acknowledgements

For clarification purposes the use of the term 'we' and 'our' through this strategy refer to Kent County Council and key actions are emboldened.

## **Chapter 1: The context, vision and rationale of the development of early education and childcare in Kent**

### **The context of this strategy**

This strategy aims to provide the vision and rationale for the development of early education and childcare for children between the ages of 0 and 5 years. In developing this strategy we are mindful of:

- The important aims that Kent County Council shares with Government in relation to Every Child Matters. That is, all children should be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and, achieve economic well being.
- The development of the Children's Trust approach to working in a co-operative multi-agency framework to improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families. Appendix one sets out more information on the Children's Trust approach.
- The important role that early education and childcare providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector have to play in taking forward our vision.
- The statutory framework in relation to the provision of early education and childcare<sup>1</sup>. Appendix two sets out the national and statutory framework.

It is not intended to be a detailed action plan as this will be set out in operational plans by the appropriate services implementing this strategy.

This strategy is one of a suite of strategies that has been developed by Kent County Council to improve the outcomes of all children from birth to 19. It should be read in conjunction with KCC's strategy for the provision of services in and around schools and Kent Children's Trust Parenting Strategy. The former focuses on the provision of childcare for older children as part of a range of services offered in and around schools, while the latter aims to support parents and carers so that all children fulfil their potential. The full suite of strategies falls under the umbrella of the Kent Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This is the single, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in the county. Appendix three provides more information about the key strategies.

### The context for compulsory schooling and early education provision

In England the statutory age for admission to compulsory schooling falls at five years and early education provision is available to all three and four year old children<sup>2</sup>. The introduction of the early education entitlement is relatively new in comparison to the age of admission to compulsory schooling that was set by the House of Commons in the 1860s. It is perhaps not surprising that the statutory age of compulsory schooling

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<sup>1</sup> To meet the requirements of parents in order that they can work or undertake education or training leading to work. For children up to the age of 14 and up to the age of 16 for those with special educational needs and/or a disability.

<sup>2</sup> Parents and carers are able to claim the free entitlement for up to two years starting in April, August or January following their child's third birthday.

and 'early education' provision varies immensely from country to country. For example, in comparison to much of Europe and other English speaking countries the statutory age for admission to compulsory schooling in the UK is a lot earlier than the norm. There is also considerable variation across the countries with regard to the pre-school curriculum, levels, and qualifications levels of staff. It is interesting to note that the National Literacy Trust<sup>3</sup> found that children in the Netherlands have the best quality of life followed by Sweden (and Denmark) although the models applied in these two countries do differ enormously. Appendix four gives some background information on provision in other countries.

## **The Vision**

Kent County Council has set out its overarching vision:

"In Kent's successful communities, achievement exceeds aspiration, diversity is valued and every child and family is supported. Children and young people are positive about their future and are at the heart of joined up service planning. They are:

- Nurtured and encouraged at home
- Inspired and motivated by school
- Safe and secure in the community
- Living healthy and fulfilled lives"

*Kent Children's and Young Person's Plan 2006 – 2009: Positive About Our Future*

"Providing our youngest children with the very best start in life is crucial. Early years/nursery education has an enormous impact in developing a child's willingness to learn from an early age, along with building essential social skills and good behaviour. With these key skills, a child's appetite for learning is considerably improved."

*KCC's Towards 2010 'Learning for everyone – Getting it right from the start'*

What is clear is that no child in Kent should be left to fail and that all children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential. The provision of, and access to, appropriate good quality early education and flexible childcare is essential if all children are to thrive and make optimum progress in their learning and development. This is crucial to developing the intellectual, cognitive, social and behavioural development of all the young children in Kent. We especially recognise the importance of creativity in early education and childcare settings and that the child who practices creative play becomes socially competent and, can learn and thrive. We understand that it is essential that the early education and childcare workforce is supported and developed to facilitate provision of the highest quality.

We cannot achieve this in isolation. We need to work with and support our partners in schools who offer extended services and nursery provision and in the private, voluntary and independent sectors which provide early education and childcare, as well as our partners in Health, other agencies and voluntary groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Literacy changes lives (2007).

## Rationale for change

### The national perspective

*The following narrative draws on a number of national research papers. Appendix five sets out the papers that have informed this section of the strategy.*

While many children do well at school and go on to achieve economic well being there remains a cohort of children who do not. Research shows that children who grow up in poverty are likely to be disadvantaged in terms of lifestyle, education, future employment prospects and health. While the cost to the individual is essentially around the damage and disadvantage they suffer there is also a cost to society; for example, community safety and the financial burden arising from youth and adult offending, teenage pregnancy, healthcare and the provision of government benefits.

National policy has taken some families out of poverty but there are still too many families remaining in poverty. What is more, poverty levels in the UK are higher and families stay in poverty longer than most other European countries. In addition, the income levels of families are increasing at different rates with the income of the most disadvantaged families showing the least growth. That is the gap between those who are more well off and those who are not is increasing.

Particular groups affected by poverty are:

- Families with adults outside of work
- Children from black and minority ethnic families (including children in asylum seeking families and Gypsy/Traveller children)
- Families in low wages
- Lone parent families, particularly teenage mothers
- Families affected by disability
- Large families
- Children in poor housing (e.g. temporary accommodation and housing unfit for human habitation)
- Young people living independently.

We must also bear in mind there will also be groups of children who may not be living in poverty but would be termed 'vulnerable'. For example, those at risk or in the care of the Local Authority and those who are disabled or who have learning difficulties.

In terms of making a difference to disadvantaged children it is clear that:

- Early years are seen as crucial to influencing later life chances. Evidence shows that early experiences such as the quality of the home environment, family structure, pre-school care and relationships with caring adults produce a pattern of development in later life that is hard to reverse even through schooling.
- Educational attainment continues to be a strong predictor of social mobility and experiences in the early years are seen as being key to educational attainment.

- Work is the best way out of poverty and high quality and flexible childcare is crucial. Research indicates no adverse effects of maternal employment on the cognitive development of 3 to 5 year olds.
- Interventions that provide high quality care and education to children are more effective in changing outcomes particularly in the cognitive domain, than interventions aimed at improving home environments and parental behaviour. High quality interventions can produce substantial cognitive gains particularly for families from lower socio-economic groups.
- Quality that is sensitive and responsive to individual needs matters. Conversely there are adverse behavioural effects of being in poor quality provision for long hours.
- There are doubts at national level about the effectiveness of Surestart, including their failure to reach the most disadvantaged groups, although it is acknowledged that the full impact of Children's Centres will not be apparent for some time.
- Ethnic minorities do not, generally, use nurseries as much as white families and children of manual workers participate less in early years provision. Families affected by disabilities are poorly served and mothers of large families are deterred from entering the labour market.
- Flexibility and appropriateness to meet needs in provision is key but is often an issue as is cost of provision.

#### How far have we come in relation to the provision of early education and childcare?

The County Council has:

- exceeded Government targets by almost 40% to increase the number of childcare places available<sup>4</sup>. This has created an increase of 2,787 places;
- met Kent's target to double the number of Kent County Council maintained nursery units from 35 to 70 by September 2006; This has created an additional 1,820 places; *2002/06 Next 4 Years target*
- met our target<sup>5</sup> to increase the number of three and four year olds taking up early education a year early. This means we have 2,000 more three year olds taking up their free entitlement.
- developed a quality accreditation mark covering all aspects of provision to be offered all early years settings<sup>6</sup>;
- delivered a full training programme and a range of conferences to early years and childcare professionals covering a range of areas including inclusion and equalities issues;
- promoted equality of access through outreach projects in Ashford, Dover and Gravesham;
- implemented a procurement framework for training to be delivered by other providers to the private, voluntary and independent sector;
- a Children's Information Service which has achieved the Matrix Quality Award for its internal and external services to customers; and,
- been successful to date in our implementation of the children's centre agenda. Specifically, in Round One (2004-2006) there are 20 centres and from our target

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<sup>4</sup> This relates to targets set for the period April 2004 to March 2006 and they do not take account of any subsequent closures of provision.

<sup>5</sup> The Kent Area Agreement (outcome 1) – target delivery date March 2008.

<sup>6</sup> The accreditation will be piloted in September 2007.

of 52 additional centres in Round Two (2006-2008), 52 sites are identified of which 2 have already designated.

We are also working to achieve the following high level targets:

- Improve the quality of early years education by strengthening the links between pre-schools/nurseries and primary schools, thereby improving children's ability to learn when they enter primary school; *Towards 2010*
- Increase the take up of free early education by three year olds of three sessions per week or more to 88% by 2008; *CYPP<sup>7</sup>*
- Implement the Children's Centres programme across Kent (see chapter 4 of this Strategy); *CYPP*
- Roll out the Kent Early Support Programme, to provide more co-ordinated multi agency services for children with a disability/developmental delay who are under five; *CYPP*
- Improve the quality of early years provision through training and support to pre schools, quality assurance, the development of Children's Centres and integration of Sure Start Local Programmes; *CYPP*
- Establish and then increase the level of take up of Early Years places ensuring consistent access to Early Year's provision for children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and other vulnerable groups of children; *CYPP*
- Improve early education outcomes for children through interventions over a three year period to enhance personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy; *CYPP*
- Extend childcare to meet the needs of working parents, including out of school provision; and, *CYPP*
- Increase the number of schools offering effectively planned multi-agency/partner activities covering childcare, breakfast clubs, adult and family learning and health programmes, matching need and demand. *CYPP*

Appendix six sets out a range of information relating to the current level of provision, the quality of provision and the profile of the workforce.

### What needs to change?

While our existing achievements and targets will make a difference to the outcomes of the majority of the children of Kent, this is not sufficient if we are to realise our vision that no child in Kent should be left to fail and that all children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential. We need to ensure that we do make a difference to the life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and this will mean a more targeted approach. For example, in terms of our targets we should working towards:

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<sup>7</sup> The targets within the Children and Young People's Plan fall under the umbrella of the Children's Trust but Kent County Council has a specific responsibility to deliver these targets.

- Increasing the number of 3 and 4 year olds who are from disadvantaged backgrounds taking up their free entitlement to early education.
- Closing the gap in attainment for PSED and CLL of the Early Years Foundation Stage between those children who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those children who are not.
- Increasing the percentage of families who are from disadvantaged backgrounds using Children’s Centres and that families who are not accessing the centres are visited as part of outreach work.
- Increasing the number of parents from disadvantaged families who are accessing information via the Kent Children’s Information Service and that information on funding available for childcare is provided to this group of families.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate early education and childcare provision in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent and to specific groups such as teenage mothers.
- Increasing the number of appropriately qualified staff at level two and level three in early years settings, particularly in early years settings in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent.

*The following chapters of this strategy look in more depth at how we can make a difference to the outcomes of all children.*

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## **Chapter 2: Support for those most in need**

This chapter looks at specific arrangements to support those children and families most in need. These are:

- vulnerable early years learners (the Leuven Model);
- children with LDD (learning difficulties and/or disabilities);
- children at risk of abuse or who are in the care of a local authority;
- young carers; and,
- teenage parents.

We must also bear in mind that transition to primary school is a very important time and therefore this is included in the latter part of this chapter. The final part of this chapter looks the important role that health visitors and others have to play in improving the health and well-being of pre-school children and their families and how by working with them we can improve outcomes for children.

### **The Leuven Model (for vulnerable early years learners)**

The Local Authority has developed links with Professor Ferre Laevers of Leuven University, Belgium to use the ‘Leuven Model’ to improve children’s outcomes particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children is a process-oriented monitoring system, which provides professionals with a tool for quality assessment. It looks at how ‘involved’ the child is in their work and their ‘emotional well-being’ allowing professionals to highlight children who may need extra support in the classroom to help each child reach their full potential in terms of learning. In Kent, the Leuven Involvement Scale is being used on a trial basis and is targeted at specific areas with training provided to Local

Authority staff and staff in early years settings. Appendix four sets out more information about the Leuven Model.

**We will evaluate and review the project with a view for wider implementation across early education settings.**

### **Children with LDD (learning difficulties and/or disabilities)**

About one child out of every five, may at some stage during their education, require differentiated support in school or early years setting because of a special educational need. A very small percentage of these may need longer-term support and some with severe and complex needs may require a statement of special educational need. Within the Local Authority and school clusters, there are a number of specialist staff in post to support the education of pre-school children who have been identified as having special education needs. These are:

- Pre-school Special Educational Needs teachers
- Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- Specialist teachers (physical and sensory)
- Portage home visitors

**We will ensure that there is:**

- **co-ordinated and consistent training across all early years provision;**
- **co-ordinated working between all early years providers and public and voluntary agencies involved in caring for vulnerable children;**
- **consistent and accountable quality assurance across provision; and,**
- **good practice at transition from home to pre-school and pre-school into school.**

Across Kent there is specialist expertise available to support meeting the needs of children under statutory school age with profound, severe and complex special educational needs. Children do not need a statement to access this expertise and local teams consider individual needs and ensure appropriate support is provided. This work complements the County Council's rollout of Early Support. This approach is based on joint working with the Health Services, where at a local level professionals across all agencies work collaboratively to co-ordinate support for the child and their parents to achieve the best outcomes for children between 0 – 5 years who have profound, severe and complex needs.

### **Safeguarding Children**

It's estimated that at least one child dies each week in England and Wales as a result of physical abuse<sup>8</sup>. Babies are particularly vulnerable, being much more likely to be killed than all other ages. Nationally<sup>9</sup>, approximately 26,400 children, who have been identified by professionals as at risk of abuse<sup>10</sup>, are currently on the child protection register. This figure represents 24 children per 10,000 of the population aged under

<sup>8</sup> From NSPCC Key Facts and Figures.

<sup>9</sup> From statistics published by the former Department of Education and Skills (now known as the Department of Children, Schools and Families) 2006.

<sup>10</sup> This could be physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

18. In Kent, there are approximately 930 children on the Child Protection Register which represents 30.3 children per 10,000 population.

**We will work with all the agencies involved to:**

- alert early education and childcare providers and staff to the issues of child protection and, provide training and advice;
- support early education and childcare providers and staff to make referrals;
- support early education and childcare providers and staff to contribute to the individual care plans of children identified as being at risk of abuse; and,
- support and advise early education and childcare providers where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

**Looked After Children**

There is a significant gap between the outcomes of looked after children and other children and evidence suggests that they are less likely to access their entitlement to early education<sup>11</sup>. As a corporate parent, the Local Authority must not accept any less for them than parents would for their own children.

**We will:**

- work with early education and early years childcare providers to raise awareness of particular issues, such as the effect of early trauma;
- work with foster carers who care for children in the care of KCC to raise awareness of the importance of early education and play as a secure foundation for more formal learning;
- make sure that three and four year old children in the care of KCC can go to early years education<sup>12</sup>.
- identify, collect and share data for all looked after 3-5 years olds in the care of KCC as appropriate to improve access and take-up of pre-school education;
- track and monitor attainment and achievement of looked after children in the care of KCC, aged 0-5; and,
- raise awareness and encourage early years providers to use the early years personal education plans as a tool to plan for education in the widest sense, within the overall care plan.

While we are fully signed up to national and local policies to improve the outcomes for looked after children there are a significant number of these children who, while placed in care in Kent, come under the control of other local authorities<sup>13</sup>. This means that not all of what we have set out to do will apply to all looked after children in Kent. Some of it will apply to only those who are in care of KCC. Clearly we would want to improve the outcomes of all children who are looked after in Kent regardless

<sup>11</sup> The Government's Green Paper Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care – October 2006.

<sup>12</sup> This is part of the (draft) KCC pledge to Looked After Children.

<sup>13</sup> These children would have been taken into care by other Local Authorities and the legal responsibility for the child's care remains with that Local Authority regardless of where they place them.

of who the corporate parent is and where this is appropriate and realistic we will do so.

## **Young carers**

Young carers are identified as a group of young people in need of support and that being a young carer may adversely affect their physical, or emotional well being and can limit their social or educational opportunities. Research<sup>14</sup> shows that siblings cared for by young carers are much more likely to have learning difficulties. The Local Authority has developed a Young Carer Strategy in order to set out a clear framework as to how we will support young carers and enable them to fulfil their potential. A key strand of this strategy will be how we will work to ensure that the children of the parents of young carers are not disadvantaged.

**We will work with agencies and providers to ensure that the parents of young carers have accessible and comprehensive information so that their children are able to take up their early education entitlement and parents/carers can access flexible childcare.**

## **Teenage Parents**

The incidence of early parenthood is considerably higher in lower social economic groups. Similarly the long term health and economic outcomes for young parents and their children are influenced by family history and experience. Kent County Council is working as part of the Kent Teenage Pregnancy Partnership to help young parents to realise their social, academic and employment potential. The first stage of the support offered to young people concentrates on the well being of the parent and the child whereas the second stage is to help the young person prepare and plan for the future. Short courses provided through this initiative are supported by good quality childcare provision at Children's Centres, with childcare funded through the Care2Learn scheme. This type of work is being piloted in Folkestone, Canterbury, Thanet, Maidstone and Ashford.

**We will build on this work and extend the services offered so that all young parents can access this provision.**

## **Transition**

Finally, if we are to maximise the benefits of the early education experience then this strategy also needs to include a focus on successful transition. The beginning of primary school represents the true beginning of formal education for all children and their families. It is a time of excitement and curiosity but this event can bring many uncertainties and worries for both children and adults involved, especially if the child has more complex needs.

**We will work with schools and early education and childcare providers to help young children and families prepare for entrance to primary school and, where children have more complex needs we will identify and involve key people to ensure a successful transition.**

## **Working with health professionals and others**

<sup>14</sup> By Loughborough University in 2004.

Health services and other parenting health services play a vital role in the earliest months and years of a child's life. Health visitors in particular have a high credibility with families and are the earliest point of contact with parents. National policy sets out that the focus of their work is on pre-school children and that their primary role is to lead and deliver the Child Health Promotion Programme, using a family focused public health approach and to deliver intensive programmes for the most vulnerable children and families. They will take the lead in working with the whole family and early intervention, promoting infant, child and family health, and supporting the capacity for better parenting, including safeguarding children and addressing domestic violence. As highly trained professionals they will be responsible for more challenging areas such as building therapeutic relationships and addressing difficult issues in families with more complex needs, identifying existing and future vulnerability and engaging with hard to reach groups and individuals.

It is crucial that if we are to support the most disadvantaged families that we work with health visitors and others so that we can identify those in need at the earliest stage of a child's life and support them to access appropriate childcare and early education.

**We will work with health visitors, health professionals and others so that the most disadvantaged families are able to access appropriate childcare and early education.<sup>15</sup>**

### **Chapter 3: Quality of provision and supporting the workforce**

#### **Quality of provision**

We have a vision for learners. It is that they will be self-confident and enjoy high levels of self-esteem. They will be able to organise themselves and demonstrate a strong drive for exploration, leading to entrepreneurship. As effective communicators, they will have the capacity to understand, react and represent their communication in a variety of forms, including artistic, numeric and linguistic. They will be socially competent with well developed interaction skills, acting on knowledge of consequences. They will make optimum progress in their learning and development.

Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn possible next steps in their development and a clear understanding of learning. Young children learn best through active, engaged, meaningful learning with play being the way most children will do most of their learning for most of the time. Learning for young children needs to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Practitioners will need to provide an environment that allows a wide range of choices and opportunities for self initiated activity for children to be confident to try new activities and initiate new ideas.

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<sup>15</sup> The Local Authority has, under the umbrella, of the Kent Children's developed a Parenting Strategy. This strategy sets out in more detail the work that the Local Authority is undertaking with health professionals and others to improve the outcomes of families and young children.

Our aspirations are that there will be powerful learning environments with:

- early education and childcare settings that are well planned and provide effective learning and play environments both inside and outside, and that these are evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis;
- children being observed to discover what fascinates them and finding activities to meet these interests;
- activities which help children to explore the world of behaviour, feelings and values, and the relationships between children being explored to improve them;
- staff in settings being able to identify children with emotional and developmental problems and apply interventions to support them;
- high quality care with effective relationships between adults and children.

As a strategic leader it is critical that we bring about change so that in terms of high-level outcomes there is an increasing proportion of settings judged to be good or outstanding and an improvement in the quality of teaching, leadership and management. Equally important, is the need to ensure that we close gaps in attainment at the Early Years Foundation Stage between those children who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those children who are not. In view of this, the Local Authority has developed a Strategy for the Quality Assurance of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This strategy is intended to guide leaders, managers and staff in all early years settings as well as Local Authority staff and those involved in the delivery of children's services. This strategy sets out that we will work in partnership with settings, practitioners and agencies to improve outcomes for all children.

**We will:**

- **collect high quality, accurate and reliable data and information so that we know our settings and work with them on improving quality;**
- **monitor provision and children's outcomes throughout the early years, and across settings and school using performance indicators that are capable of measurement and can demonstrate value-added;**
- **support settings through audit and self-evaluation processes and recognise quality provision through accreditation of a Kent Quality Mark;**
- **set up an improvement partner programme;**
- **support training and development of the early years and childcare workforce (this is covered in more detail later in this chapter);**
- **set up a recovery programme to support those settings that are deemed in adequate and-an-improvement programme for 'just satisfactory' settings;**
- **develop closer link with health and other agencies, and build on localised partnerships to improve delivery of services for settings;**
- **support settings to work in partnership with parents and agencies to improve outcomes for all children; and,**
- **support settings through targeted resources and training in ensuring that young children including those at risk of underachievement are able to achieve their full potential.**

**Supporting the early years and childcare workforce**

Our vision for our early years and childcare leaders is that they will be ambitious for their learners and the children they care for. They will be appropriately qualified and committed to the professional development of themselves and their staff, and operate effective recruitment and retention policies. They will also have good business acumen and managerial skills, and have a good knowledge of the principles and practices of the National Day Care Standards and for early years leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our vision for our early years and childcare practitioners is that they will have a sound knowledge of child development and form strong relationships with children and their parents/carers. They will have excellent communication skills, high levels of self-confidence and organisational ability, and the ability to work collaboratively. They will also understand what makes for good leadership and management, and set out a professional development path for themselves to improve what they do and increase their knowledge about children's needs and learning. Overall, they will be clear about their role and the contribution they can make towards creating a strong and positive environment for learning and play; they will feel supported, trusted and know that their views are valued.

In summary, practitioners should develop their abilities across the Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP). They should improve their relationships with both children and adults and develop an understanding of the individual and diverse ways that children develop and learn. They should actively support and extend children's learning in and across all areas and aspects of learning and play, taking account of all children's needs, learning styles and interests. They should also work with parents/carers and the wider community.

Clearly, it is essential that the Local Authority works in partnership with settings to make our vision become reality and improve the outcomes of all children. What is also important is the need to increase the number of appropriately qualified staff at level two and level three in early years settings in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent. The Kent strategy for the Quality Assurance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (as mentioned earlier in this chapter) sets out how we will support the training and professional development of leaders, managers and staff in early years settings.

**We will:**

- ensure that training and support offered to settings is inclusive of all children's needs and will support settings in meeting effectively the needs of all and improving the outcomes of vulnerable groups and those at risk of underachievement.
- develop and implement an overarching workforce development plan that links all forms of professional development with training and covers all aspects of a setting's needs in line with both education and care standards;
- develop and implement a leadership development strategy;
- ensure that training and support is targeted and focused through a single point of contact with the setting;
- develop improvement plans through self-evaluation;
- commission appropriate levels of training by analysing the needs of settings by cluster, allocating resources, both internal and external training against prioritised needs, monitoring delivery of training, evaluating impact and adjusting training in the light of outcomes;

- work with qualified teachers to support specific training and development opportunities of early education and childcare staff in Children’s Centres;
- maximise the impact of the Government’s funding streams to improve qualification levels of those working in early years settings, particularly those working in areas of disadvantage;
- support the retention of the early years workforce through the Early Years Professional Status and improve the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of disabled children and those with special educational needs; and,
- work with HE and FE colleges to identify training and career development opportunities.

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## **Chapter 4: Securing sufficient and accessible early education and childcare in Kent**

### **Sufficient and accessible early education and childcare**

A key area of the Local Authority’s work is to ensure that there is sufficient and accessible early education and childcare. We have embarked on the four practical steps to develop the early education and childcare market. These are to analyse demand, map supply, map demand to supply and secure sufficiency. We have already undertaken extensive research through a survey conducted across Kent during 2005-06 and through the Kent Parents Consultation Project. The latter has been highlighted, nationally, as a model of good practice<sup>16</sup>.

Our analysis has helped the County Council to understand the early education and childcare market, the needs of families and how to develop sustainable provision that meets local needs and increase the take-up of the free entitlement. What we have found is that:

- the main factors influencing parents’ choice in using childcare are access to information, employment status and size of family;
- income was found to correlate most closely with take-up of childcare in Kent, i.e. more affluent families were more likely to take-up childcare; and,
- there is scope for expansion in existing settings<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time we must bear in mind that the number of Kent children is expected to decline over the next decade by some 9,500 pupils (about 4.5%).

It is very important that in developing the market that we ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate early education and childcare in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent and for specific disadvantaged groups such as those children with disabilities or learning difficulties.

**We will:**

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<sup>16</sup> As part of a case study in the Government’s document - Choice for parents, the best start for children: Making it happen.

<sup>17</sup> 21% of settings have scope to expand the number of places offered and 34% of settings have scope to expand the number of hours offered.

- **continue with our research in order to give a wide ranging balanced view of the needs of the childcare market, including how best we can ensure that the most disadvantaged families are able to access provision;**
- **work with providers and potential providers to support capacity and so that gaps in provision are filled;**
- **aim to ensure a mixed economy of private, public, voluntary and independent providers so that there is vibrant provision but where we identify specific gaps in provision e.g. to disabled children we will need to take direct action so that these children are not disadvantaged;**
- **extend the development of Children’s Centres (this is covered in more detail at the end of this chapter);**
- **where appropriate, necessary and possible give priority to using excess space which becomes available in our primary schools due to falling rolls for the provision of early education and childcare facilities alongside other community provision<sup>18</sup>; and,**
- **take account of the need of parents for childcare for which tax credits<sup>19</sup> can be claimed in developing the childcare market and work with partners in developing charging regimes for services.**

### **Free early education for 3 and 4 years olds**

From April 2007 the Government is gradually extending the core offer of free early education and care for all 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours a week so that by 2010 all children across the country will receive this entitlement. These changes are being introduced in a small number of ‘pathfinder’ areas in 2007. The aim of the pathfinders is to inform best practice models by looking at:

- expanding the range of hours when the free provision is available;
- increasing the length of session times beyond the current period of 2.5 hours; and,
- supporting partnerships between different providers so that parents can access the free entitlement between 8am and 6pm.

We have been working, and will continue to do so, to increase the number of three and four year olds accessing their entitlement to free early education. However, it is essential that, as part of our work, we increase the number of three and four year olds who are from disadvantaged backgrounds taking up their free entitlement to early education.

#### **We will:**

- **increase the entitlement of free early education in September 2009;**
- **learn from these best practice models on how our Local Authority can broker partnerships in a way that prioritises and maintains continuity of care for the child, and a seamless service for the parent;**
- **work with providers to extend the flexibility of provision that is available;**
- **use the findings from our research to inform work to increase the take-up of the free entitlement by disadvantaged families; and,**

<sup>18</sup> Recommendation 30 of Kent Primary Strategy.

<sup>19</sup> Lone parents and couples can claim up to 80% of the cost of childcare through working tax credits provided they meet set criteria

- **revise the criteria we set for providers to be featured in our Kent County Council Directory of Early Years Providers.**

### **Children's Centres**

In the context of the Every Child Matters agenda, Children's Centres are seen as being crucial to improving services to children and families. They bring together a range of services for childcare, early education, health and family support in convenient community settings for use by families, parents and carers of children under five. Public, private and voluntary organisations are intended to work together in the centres to provide services to all young families but with a particular emphasis on improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged children. It should be borne in mind that Children's Centres are not intended to compete with early education and childcare provision in the private, voluntary and independent sector. It is an opportunity for providers and the centres to work in a collaborative and integrated way as part of an overall package of care for children and families.

Appendix seven sets out more information on Children's Centres including the timetable for their development and the range of services provided.

#### **We will:**

- **develop a robust framework for improved partnering arrangements between KCC, our statutory partners, children's centres, childcare settings and the PVI providers to achieve improved outcomes for children and their families through collaborative multi-agency working;**
  - **engage with schools, early education and childcare providers to shape service provision in Children's Centres;**
  - **work with our partners to ensure that a range of services is provided to support children and families. This will include working with the health services so that a range of family health services are provided and Jobcentre Plus so that parents/carers have access to information and support services in relation to employment and training;**
  - **take account of the recent national findings on phase 1 of the Surestart programme in the development and review of provision to ensure that Children's Centres are fully effective and services reach the most disadvantaged families; and,**
  - **take account of the views of children and parents/carers as part of planning and evaluating service provision in Children's Centres.**
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## Chapter 5: Working with parents

We want parents/carers to be active contributors to the learning and care process and have a good knowledge of their child's development and learning and we need to support parents/carers to make the best choices for their child's early education and childcare. They need to know what quality early education and childcare provision is available in their local area and their children's entitlements if they are to exercise real choice and have confidence in what they are choosing.

We have already embarked on work to promote early education and childcare provision to parents and carers across the county, by providing a range of information to them through our promotional campaigns and the Kent Children's Information Service, and this work will continue. However, there are some parents/carers who do not access the early education entitlement for their child and/or access the services of a children's centre. For example, our own local intelligence tells us that children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families are one such group. We need to ensure that those parents/carers not accessing provision are aware of their child's entitlement, the importance of their child accessing early education and how the Children's Centres can help them in relation to the care and well being of their family. It is crucially important that we work with Health Visitors, Midwives, Children's Centres, schools and others to identify disadvantaged families and those parents who are not accessing services in order that we can target support (this is covered in more detail in chapter 2). We must also be mindful that for some groups of parents/carers language, culture or disability may be a barrier to access and that we will need to provide additional support. It is also important that along with involving, PVI providers, Children's Centres and schools in the planning and review of services that we also we also involve parents.

### **We will:**

- **work with our partners, particularly Health Visitors and Midwives to identify disadvantaged and hard to reach families;**
- **ensure that our campaign to promote early education and childcare across the county also focuses on geographical areas and community groups that are disadvantaged and where there is low take-up;**
- **provide a range of information to parents/carers, particularly targeting disadvantaged groups and where take-up is low;**
- **raise awareness of the free entitlement through outreach work with disadvantaged groups and those where take-up is low;**
- **provide a "brokerage" service for those parents who are finding it difficult to get appropriate provision;**
- **raise awareness with early education and childcare providers to help them support the specific needs of disadvantaged groups and hard to reach groups;**
- **work to recognise and understand the specific needs of these groups through outreach work and provide them with information in their first language or alternative formats where this is appropriate to do so; and,**
- **ensure that we involve parents in the planning and review of services.**

*The Local Authority recognises the importance of supporting parents/carers to be active contributors to the learning and development of their child and has, under the umbrella, of the Kent Children's developed a Parenting Strategy. Work to support*

*parents and carers to make the best choices for their child's early education and childcare is a key strand of this strategy.*

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## **Chapter 6: Taking the Strategy Forward**

### **Next Steps**

Clearly if we are to achieve our vision that no child in Kent will be left to fail and that all children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential then we need to ensure that we have put in place a framework for taking this strategy forward and as part of this framework we must ensure that we take a more targeted approach so that we can make a difference to the life chances of the children from the most disadvantaged families.

### **Implementing this strategy**

Kent County Council will work with partners in the statutory agencies and voluntary organisations, and early years providers from the private, voluntary and independent sector to implement this strategy. The aspirations of the strategy will inform the development of:

- the delivery of services through local Children and Young People's Plans as part of working in the Children's Trust approach (see appendix one) and;
- action planning within the Children's Families and Education Directorate of Kent County Council.

### **The strategic overview**

KCC has established the multi-agency Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board (EYCESB). This Board will take the strategic lead to achieve the aspirations of this strategy and it will also take the lead role in meeting our statutory requirements in relation to the provision of early education and childcare (see appendix 2). As part of the new arrangements for working in the Children's Trust approach, this Board will report to the county level Children's Trust (see appendix 1). The EYCESB has set up four working groups to take forward specific areas of work in relation to the provision of early education and childcare. Appendix eight sets out the terms of reference of the Board, its membership and the responsibilities of the working groups.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Kent County Council is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. We believe that access to services should be open to all regardless of social circumstances or background, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, sexuality, or religion. We recognise the importance of valuing the diversity of the workforce and that employees must be free from discrimination. We will strive to ensure that our principles and practices are reflected in taking forward this strategy, whether this is on work that we undertake directly or through working with others.

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### **The new arrangements for working The Children's Trust approach**

The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities who have responsibility for Education and Social Services to make arrangements for co-operative working between themselves and relevant partners. The vision is built on integrated service delivery to children, young people and their families supported by integrated strategy, planning, commissioning, resourcing and governance. The strategic and operational framework for all agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children is brought together under the umbrella of a Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a sub-group of the Kent Partnership and takes ownership of the associated Local Area Agreement outcomes and Vision for Kent priorities.

Agencies within Kent are initially focusing work to develop the Children's Trust approach on four pathfinders in Maidstone, Shepway<sup>20</sup> and Tunbridge Wells. These are managed at a local level by multi-agency 'Local Children's Trust Boards' and there will be Local Trust Boards in place across all of Kent by early 2008. The Boards will identify priorities relating to their own locality, develop plans<sup>21</sup> and take differentiated approaches to improve outcomes according to the differing needs of children in their localities. The development of Local Children's Trust Boards across the rest of Kent will begin in 2008 and the four pathfinders will inform their development.

### **The National and Statutory Framework**

In 2005, the Government produced its *Ten Year Strategy for Childcare*, followed by the Childcare Bill (published 8 November 2005) as the statutory underpinning to this. It confirms the vital role of local authorities as strategic leaders, and enshrines in the law a parent's expectation that high quality childcare will be available for all those who wish to work.

Before that the *Every Child Matters* green paper, later to become the basis for the *2004 Children Act*, identified the five outcomes that the Government considers most important to children and young people. These are:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution; and,
- Achieve economic well being.

The outcomes are universal, and should benefit every young child and person, regardless of their background or circumstances. The outcomes are also concerned with narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. There is a

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<sup>20</sup> There are two pathfinders in Shepway.

<sup>21</sup> Through a Local Children and Young People's Plan.

necessary focus on improving outcomes for looked after children and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Government also wishes to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and the number of people not in education, employment or training. Kent shares these important aims.

Government has also published an Action Plan, '*Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen*' to provide the framework and advice on implementation. This framework sets out two key national objectives:

- All children up to five will have high-quality early learning and care and better access to early childhood services – giving them the best start in life.
- All working parents will have access to a wide range of childcare where they can be confident that their children will thrive and be well cared for, enabling them to have greater choice about balancing work and family life.

The Government's vision is that by 2010, in every area, parents and children should find the following available to them:

- high quality integrated, accessible and flexible early education and childcare<sup>22</sup> services that meet parents' individual needs;
- a children's centre accessible by all children in most disadvantaged areas by March 2008, and in every community by 2010;
- access to information and advice about locally available childcare and other services in accordance to local need;
- the free early-education entitlement of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year is in place for all three and four years olds<sup>23</sup> (with a longer term goal of 20 hours a week for 38 weeks), integrated with childcare for 0-5 year olds;
- all schools offering access to extended services that will enable parents to access an out-of-school childcare place for all children aged 3-14 between the hours of 8-6 if required.
- increased involvement of local parents and partner organisations in the planning and delivery of local early years and childcare services; and,
- a raise in quality standards, whilst ensuring childcare remains affordable and sustainable.

The Childcare Act 2006 has introduced a new regulatory and quality regime for early years provision which will support the delivery of quality integrated education and care for children from birth until the point when they begin Key Stage 1. The new requirement, which incorporates the Guidance Birth to Three Matters; Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage; and, Care Standards for under 8's into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will be statutory from September 2008. This requirement tracks development from birth across six areas of learning and development:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Communication, language and literacy;

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<sup>22</sup> To meet the requirements of parents in order that they can work or undertake education or training leading to work. For children up to the age of 14 and up to 16 for those with special educational needs and/or a disability.

<sup>23</sup> From April 2006 the free early education of 12.5 hours a week was extended from 33 to 38 weeks for all three and four year olds and from April 2007 the Government is gradually introducing the new entitlement of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks.

- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Physical development; and,
- Creative development

All childcare for school age children from the beginning of Key Stage 1 to age 8 will have to comply with streamlined standards that ensure provision is safe and secure and that providers are suitably qualified and adhere to child:adult ratios. These criteria will be the requirements for entry on to a new Ofsted Childcare Register (OCR).

The Act has also introduced a reformed and simplified childcare and early years regulation framework which focuses on quality, ensures children are safe and simplifies the existing bureaucratic regime. This means that:

- all early years settings will be required to deliver and be inspected against the EYFS; and,
- childcare settings catering for school age children will be judged against a streamlined set of common standards either through school inspection or the OCR.

The Act also places a duty to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirement of working parents (particularly parents on low incomes or who have a disabled child). **In particular, local authorities will need to:**

- i.) **Carry out an initial assessment<sup>24</sup> to determine how much, what types and in what patterns childcare is needed, having regard to:**
  - **the views of parents;**
  - **current childcare provision; and,**
  - **socio - economic data and labour marketing patterns, including working hours.**

**The assessment must be kept under review and a full assessment should be repeated at least every three years in line with regulations and guidance.**

- ii.) **Work with local partners to fill gaps in the market as far as is reasonably practicable, by continuing to shape and support the market using a range of mechanisms such as:**
  - **business and financial planning advice and support and training;**
  - **start up funding (capital and revenue); and,**
  - **other subsidies including sustainability training.**
- iii.) **Provide an information and advice service for parents and prospective parents on the range of support services available to them in caring for children and young people aged up to 20.**

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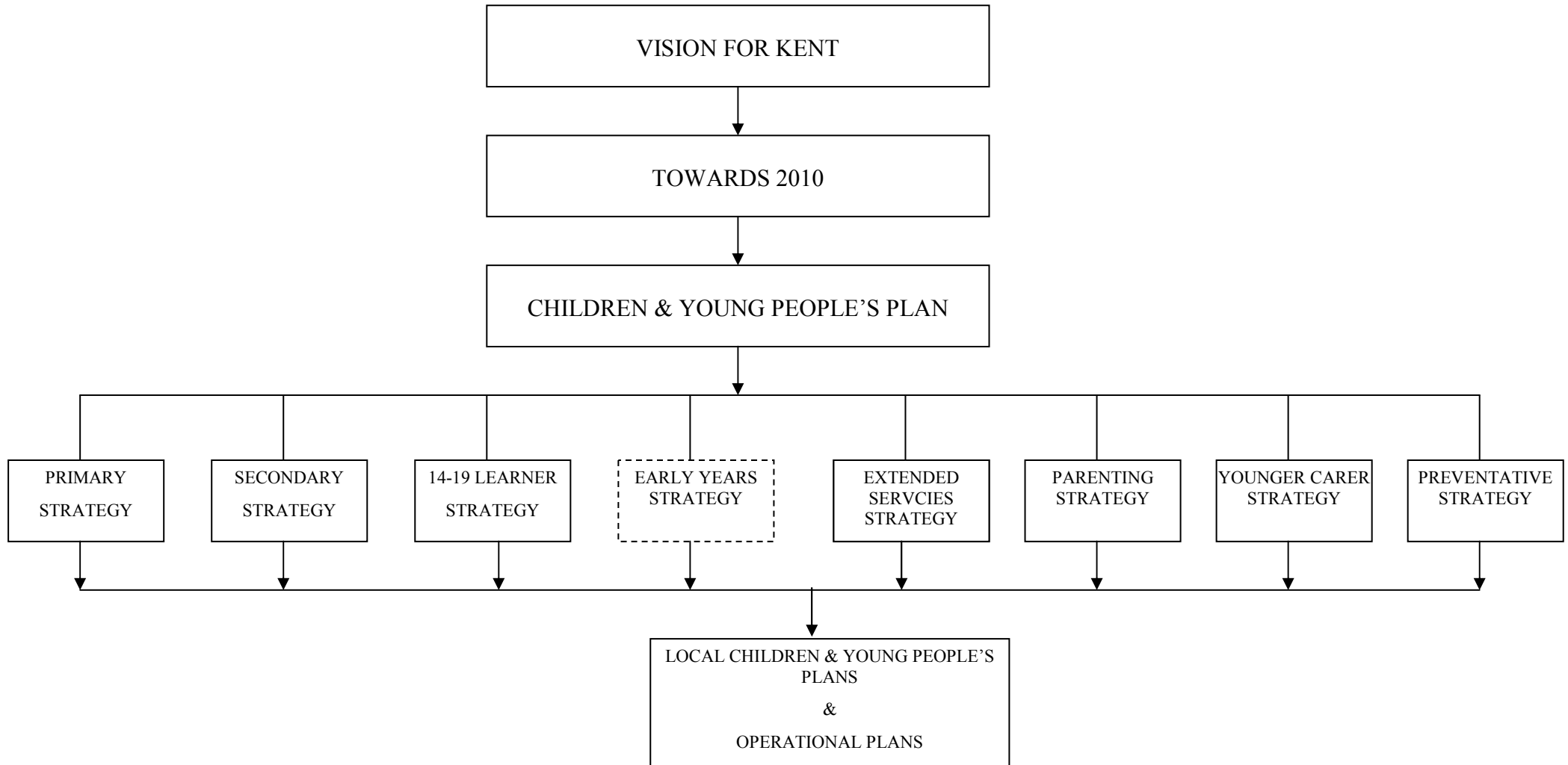
<sup>24</sup> This comes into force in April 2007 and authorities are required to complete their first assessment during 2007-08.

A crucial part of the statutory framework is the Government's Statutory Guidance on the Early Years Outcome Duty<sup>25</sup>. This statutory guidance outlines what local authorities and their partners should do to fulfil their duties under section 1 – 4 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<sup>25</sup> Published in autumn 2007.

### KEY STRATEGIC PLANS AND STRATEGIES





### **Background information Pre-school provision in other countries**

This appendix sets out differing models and levels of provision in other countries. It includes:

- Some examples of curricular approaches in early years education (this also includes the Leuven Model which is being used in some parts of Kent).
- Age of admission to compulsory schooling.
- Publicly funded provision for 3 – 7 year olds.
- Adult to child ratio for 3 – 6 year olds.
- Qualification levels for staffing.

#### Curricular approaches used in early education

Practices across western developed countries vary with regard to the existence of local and national curriculum. What is clear that they share common features:

- Most countries used areas of learning to structure the curriculum and argued for a holistic approach.
- There is general agreement on the areas of development to be addressed by the early years curriculum. These are social and emotional, cultural, aesthetic and creative, physical, environmental, language and literacy and numeracy.
- An active play-based curriculum, with children encouraged to be independent learners was almost universal.
- In most of these countries the practitioner was seen as supporting and facilitating children's learning rather than directing or leading it.

The characteristics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice are at the core of the curriculum guidance for early years education in the UK and this practice is promoted across the USA. These characteristics are:

- A balance between children's self-initiated learning and practitioner guidance.
- Opportunities for children to make meaningful choices between activities offered.
- Scope to explore through active involvement.
- A mix of small group, whole group and independent activities.
- Play as a primary (but not the exclusive) medium for learning.
- Adults who demonstrate, question, model, suggest alternatives and prompt reflection.
- Systematic observation of children's learning and behaviour.

Five alternative curricular approaches are explored below and give examples of how common themes in thinking about early years education have been translated into other practices. In particular, these alternative approaches share common features such as a holistic view of learning and the learner, active or experiential learning, respect for children's ability to be self-motivating and, interactions between children and adults seen as being crucial to learning.

### *i) Experimental Education*

The Experimental Education Approach was developed by Laevers and associates, and has become an influential model for early years education in Flanders and the Netherlands. It focuses on the educational process and the experience of children in educational settings, arguing that two key dimensions are necessary for high quality:

- Emotional well being (indicated by being at ease, having self-confidence, acting spontaneously).
- Involvement (measured by the Leuven Involvement Scale, ranging from no activity through involvement at a routine level, to intense involvement with purpose and pleasure).

The Experimental Education model has been adopted by Pascal and Bertram as the basis for the Effective Early Learning project and used widely in England to support the evaluation and development of good quality practice.

In Kent, the Local Authority has developed links with Professor Ferre Laevers of Leuven University, Belgium to use the 'Leuven Model' to improve children's outcomes particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Leuven Involvement Scale is a methodology that is used to assess children on the level of their well-being and involvement in relation to learning. Professor Laevers bases his theories on the premise that the most productive learning occurs when we are so involved with something that we lose ourselves in it.

The methodology utilises observations of a child when he or she is in a setting, with the observer looking for a list of signals that are recorded on a five-point scale. These signals range from level one "where a child may seem absent and display no energy, activity is simple, repetitive and passive", to level five "where a child is concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent with intense activity revealing the greatest involvement".

When a child exhibits low levels of well-being and/ or involvement, staff plan interventions to improve the situation. No blame is attributed to the child, with the staff taking responsibility for adjusting the situation in order to enable the child to achieve higher levels of engagement. By using the Leuven scales again staff can judge the efficacy of their interventions. In many cases by putting the ten action points in place higher levels of well being and involvement are achieved. If the child is still exhibiting low levels of well being and/ or involvement the support of other agencies would be sought.

The methodology and processes of this work are similar in conception to that operated by the national strategies in both mainstream and special schools. That is, by staff having the skills, knowledge and understanding to provide:

- quality teaching and learning opportunities – Wave One;
- adjust teaching and learning for identified group needs – Wave Two; and,
- provide individual support and intervention.- Wave Three.

This approach is one which is inclusive of needs but also targeted and specific to individual needs. The project that has been developed in Kent has been targeted at

specific areas with training provided to Local Authority staff and staff in early years settings.

### *ii) The High/Scope Curriculum (active learning through key experiences)*

This curriculum originated in the USA where it was developed by Weikart and colleagues over 40 years ago as part of a targeted early intervention programme that aimed to help disadvantaged children succeed at school and in society. High/Scope is a set of guiding principles and practices that can be adapted across educational settings and age groups. The central tenet of the approach is that children learn best through active experience and following their own interests, rather than through direct teaching. As a child makes choices and play in an environment arranged around specific interest areas they become 'naturally' engaged in what the curriculum developers call 'key experiences'. High/Scope has identified 58 key experiences for child development in the early years arranged in five groups:

- creative representation
- language and literacy
- initiative and social relations
- movement and music
- logical reasoning.

### *iii) The Reggio Emilia Approach*

This curriculum approach originated in northern Italy but has received world-wide attention. It sets out to offer children the opportunity to build thinking relationships between people, ideas and the environment, drawing on expressive, communicative and cognitive languages. The focus is on each child constructing his/her own understanding through reciprocal interactions with others and resources, particularly creative resources. Developing learning competencies is at the heart of the approach and the aim is that through dialogue and communication (spoken language, drawing, constructing models, drama, music etc.) children will develop their capacity to think, build and test theories. Content knowledge is secondary to learning about how to learn, although specific contexts and bodies of knowledge may be the focus of the children's investigations.

### *iv) Te Whariki*

Te Whariki was developed by May and Carr along with a broadly representative development team (including the main Maori early childhood organisation) to become the first national early childhood curriculum in New Zealand. This curriculum adopts a specifically socio-cultural perspective on learning that recognises the different social contexts in which children in New Zealand live and, the social and interactive nature of learning. It seeks to promote bi-culturalism and nurture learning dispositions, working from the Maori principle of 'empowering children to grow'. There are five strands to the curriculum:

- wellbeing
- belonging
- contribution
- communication
- exploration

Te Whariki was adopted by the New Zealand government in 1996.

*v) The Swedish Curriculum*

The Swedish national curriculum sets goals for early education but aims to maintain play-based, kindergarten traditions. It avoids detailed curricular guidance in favour of local interpretations and decision making about how to achieve the goals set. Nevertheless, settings are responsible for supporting all aspects of child development (along with fostering values). An understanding of children's learning as driven by play and meaning - making has led to a focus on nurturing the child's search for knowledge through play and social interaction with adults and peers, and exploration and creativity, as well as observation, discussion and reflection. Dialogue between adult and child and conscious, independent, purposeful action is at the core of the Swedish curriculum with practitioners expected to make local decisions about how to create the conditions that make this kind of engagement possible.

The five goals are about:

- Norms and values, and developing care and respect, justice and equity.
- Development and learning.
- The influence of the child, through developing the child's ability to express thoughts and feelings and understand and act by democratic principles in co-operative activity and decision-making.
- Pre-school and home relationships.
- Co-operation between pre-school class, school and leisure-time centre.

Age of admission to compulsory schooling

Country	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years
<b>Australia</b>		5 (Tasmania)	6 (other states)		
<b>Canada</b>			6	7	
<b>Finland</b>			pre school education starts (voluntary)	7	
<b>France</b>			6		
<b>Germany</b>			6	sometimes	
<b>Hungary</b>		kindergarten compulsory	6		
<b>Ireland</b>			6		
<b>Italy</b>			6		
<b>Netherlands</b>	4				
<b>New Zealand</b>		See note 1	6		
<b>Spain</b>			6		
<b>Sweden</b>			occasionally	7	exceptionally
<b>Switzerland</b>			6	7	
<b>UK England &amp; Wales</b>		5			
<b>UK N Ireland</b>	4				
<b>USA</b>		occasionally	6		

Note 1: Most children start on their fifth birthday.

Hours per week of publicly-funded provision for mainstream children from age 3-7 years

	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years	6-7 years	7-8 years
<b>Australia</b>	2.5-12.5	2.5-30	S	CS	CS
<b>Canada</b>	0	0	30	CS	CS
<b>Finland (MT)</b>	No data but day care is available	No data but day care is available	No data but day care is available	pre school education	CS
<b>France</b>	40	40	40	CS	CS
<b>Germany (MT) Former FRG states</b>	20-30	20-30	20-30	CS	CS
<b>Germany Former DDR states</b>	48	48	48	CS	CS
<b>Hungary</b>	40	40	40 (max teaching 20)	CS	CS
<b>Ireland</b>	0	23	23	CS	CS
<b>Italy</b>	48	48	48	CS	CS
<b>Netherlands</b>	6	CS	CS	CS	CS
<b>New Zealand</b>	30	30	S	CS	CS
<b>Spain (MT)</b>	25	25	25	CS	CS
<b>Sweden (MT)</b>	35	35	35	S15	CS
<b>Switzerland</b>	0	18-22.5	18-22.5	CS	CS
<b>USA (MT)</b>	0	0	0-35	CS	CS
<b>UK England &amp; Wales</b>	12.5	12.5	CS	CS	CS
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	12.5	CS	CS	CS	CS

Key: S - Children admitted to elementary education but not compulsory  
 CS – Compulsory admission to elementary education  
 MT – Means tested.

Adult/child ratios for 3 to 6 year olds

Country	Adult/child ratio	Additional Assistant
<b>Australia</b>	1:25	✓ in some states
<b>Canada</b>	1:20	
<b>Finland</b>	1:7 for 3-6 year olds 1:4 for children under 3	
<b>France</b>	public provision: >1:26 private settings: 1:8	✓ in some areas
<b>Germany</b>	1:15 to 1:30	✓
<b>Hungary</b>	1:12	✓
<b>Ireland</b>	1:30 max in infant classes wide differences across settings and substantially lower in pre-school	
<b>Italy</b>	1:12	
<b>Hong Kong</b>	Kindergartens: year olds 1:30 for 5 to 6 year olds 1:20 for 4 to 5 year olds 1:15 for 3 to 4	
	<i>recommended 1:15 for all classes from 2003</i> Childcare Centres: year olds 1:14 for 2 to 6	

	Crèches: olds	1:8 for 0 t 2 year	
	Primary (over 6 years)	1:34	
<b>Netherlands</b>	Primary school: 7 year olds	1:8 to 1:23 for 4 to	
	Playgroups:	1:4 to 1:15	✓
<b>New Zealand</b>	<i>no data</i>		
<b>Spain</b>	<i>soon to be 1:20</i>	1:25	
<b>Sweden</b>		1:15 to 1:18	
<b>Switzerland</b>		1:17	
<b>UK England</b>	<i>depends on sector, age of children and qualification of staff</i>	1:8 to 1:30	
<b>UK N Ireland</b>		1:8 to 1:30	
<b>UK Wales</b>		1:8 to 1:30	
<b>USA</b>		1:10 to 1:25	

### Early Years Staff Qualifications

<b>Country</b>	<b>Qualification</b>
<b>Australia</b>	Teachers working in facilities administered by education departments have a post-18, 4-year BEd degree in generalist ECEC, either 0-5 years or 0-8 years. Those working in services managed by Family Community Service departments in long day care settings have 3-year degrees, diplomas and associate diplomas
<b>Canada</b>	Only graduate teachers in elementary schools
<b>Finland</b>	The staff day care centres are required to have at least a secondary level degree One in 3 staff must have a post secondary level degree Pre school teachers are required to have a bachelors or master's degree
<b>France</b>	After first degree, competitive examination followed by 1 year's teacher training. Teachers are civil servants in same category as primary teachers in private settings, ratios increase to 1:8 and staff likely to be less qualified
<b>Germany</b>	A state recognised 16+ qualification
<b>Hungary</b>	3-year training for college diploma
<b>Ireland</b>	BEd, 3 or 4 year course for primary school graduates. In the pre-school sector, a wide range of courses and qualifications exists, some lasting a few weeks and some 3-year degrees. There is a little regulation of these qualifications. A training and qualification framework for the ECEC sector is being developed by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
<b>Italy</b>	In future, early years teachers will be 4-year university graduate
<b>Netherlands</b>	Graduate teachers in primary school; MBO 3-year post-18 for childcare/playgroups
<b>New Zealand</b>	From Jan 2002 all new coordinators in early childhood centres must have Diploma of Teaching. From 2005, all post holders must have D of T. Schools have graduate teachers.
<b>Spain</b>	As primary teachers, 3 years' training
<b>Sweden</b>	3-year university graduate teachers. Assistants receive some training
<b>Switzerland</b>	<i>No Data</i>
<b>UK</b>	Under the umbrella of the Childcare Act 2006, new requirements come into force from September 2008. These are set out in appendix two of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Settings and Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five) and show differential arrangements for groupings and organisations. The arrangements cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children aged under two in any early years group setting;</li> <li>▪ Children aged two in any early years group setting.</li> <li>▪ Children aged three and over in any registered early years provision.</li> <li>▪ Children aged three and over in independent schools.</li> <li>▪ Children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools.</li> <li>▪ Children aged four and over in reception classes in maintained schools</li> <li>▪ Childminders.</li> </ul> The statutory framework can be found at:

Key: ECEC - Early childhood education and care

*The following research papers have informed this appendix.*

- *Early Years Education: An International Perspective by Tony Bertram and Chris Pascal (July 2002).*
- *Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2004).*
- *Early Years Education: Perspectives for a review of the international literature a publication by the Scottish Government.*

## **Appendix 5**

### **National Research Papers which have informed this Strategy**

It doesn't happen here – the reality of child poverty in the UK – Barnardos 2007

What will it take to end child poverty? Firing on all cylinders – Joseph Rowtree 2006

Unequal Choices: Voices of experience exposing challenges and suggesting solutions to ending child poverty in the UK – a report published by End Child Poverty 2006

Breakdown Britain – Interim Report on the state of the nation – Social Policy Justice Group, on behalf of the Conservative Party 2006

Social mobility, life chances and the early years – Jane Waldfogel from Maintaining Momentum IPPR 2005

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006 by the Rowntree Foundation

Factors influencing social mobility – a report by the Department of Work & Pensions 2007

Sure Start Children's Centres: Finding on Phase 1 – House of Commons Report 2007

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## **Appendix 6**

### **Baseline Information**

#### Early Years Provision in Kent

In Kent there are around 2,600 registrations on the OfSTED Early Years Register<sup>26</sup>. Childcare and early education provision around the county includes:

- private, voluntary and independent providers of early education and/or early years childcare
- children's centres
- maintained nursery classes/nursery school

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<sup>26</sup> For care related to children under eight years old.

- maintained schools with reception classes
- childminders, some of whom are accredited to offer early education
- settings offering all year round provision
- holiday schemes.

### Take-up of the early education offer

There are around 30,000 three and four year olds in receipt of early education with 90% of 3 year olds and 95% of 4 year olds taking up at least three sessions per week of funded education. However, take-up varies widely across the county. When provision is mapped against estimated numbers of children up to 4 years old, penetration<sup>27</sup> ranges from 29% in Tunbridge Wells to 59% in Dartford. This is an aggregated district figure so there are some wards where penetration exceeds 100%. There are, however, a minority of wards where penetration is as low as 0%.

### The quality of early years provision

Standards in childcare in Kent from OfSTED inspections for the period April 06 – March 07 showed that 93.8% of settings were satisfactory or better. The national comparison is 96%.

### The Early Years Workforce Profile

Our research on the Kent workforce profile<sup>28</sup> shows that:

- 91% of leaders are educated to level 3 or above and leaders are more likely to undertake training than other paid staff;
- 68% of paid staff excluding leaders are educated to level 2 or above;
- 70% of staff have undertaken first aid training, 48% of staff have undertaken child protection training and 23% of staff have attended equality and diversity training.
- part time staff make up 31% of the workforce;
- both men and people with disabilities are underrepresented in the workforce;
- 65% of staff are aged 35 or above; and,
- staff who are from ethnic minority groups<sup>29</sup> are slightly underrepresented.

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## Appendix 7

### Children's Centres

In the context of the Every Child Matters agenda it is a requirement to provide services for children and families in a more seamless and "joined up" way. Children's Centres are a key part of this way of working for professionals developing children's services. The development of these centres is a key priority for the County Council and the aim is to ensure that all children will have access to a children's centre by 2010. Alongside our partnership working with the early education and childcare

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<sup>27</sup> The penetration rate is defined as the number of places divided by the number of children multiplied by 100. Where penetration exceeds 100%, this means that there are more places available than there are children and for a penetration rate of 0% there are no childcare places available.

<sup>28</sup> From KCC's annual analysis of pre-school (early education and childcare) providers 2005 – 06 and is based on a response rate of 67%.

<sup>29</sup> Within the KCC Area about 3.1% classify themselves as non-white (the Kent census 2001).

providers we will be working with the Health Services and Jobcentre Plus so that early childhood services are delivered in an integrated way as part of an overall package of care and services provided through Children's Centres. In Kent the timetable for the development of Children's Centres is as follows:

- Round One (2004-2006): Twenty Centres of which nine were originally Sure Start Local Programmes, reaching at least 39 of the 48 wards in the top 20% most disadvantaged nationally.
- Round Two (2006-2008): An additional 52 Centres, reaching as a minimum the top 30% disadvantaged areas based on (now) Lower Super Output Area data.
- Round Three (2008-2010): A further 30 more centres, leading to a total of up to 102, providing countywide coverage.

Children's centre will offer:

- Integrated early learning and childcare<sup>30</sup> (early years provision) for a minimum of 10 hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks a year; and support for a childminder network<sup>31</sup>;
- drop-in activity sessions for children, such as stay and play sessions;
- family support, including support and advice on parenting, information about services available in the area, access to specialist targeted services and parental outreach;
- child and family health services, such as antenatal and postnatal support, information and guidance on breastfeeding, health and nutrition, smoking cessation support, speech and language therapy and other specialist support;
- links with Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment; and,
- quick and easy access to wider services.

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## Appendix 8

### The Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board

The terms of reference of the Kent EYCESB are:

- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive early education for all 3 and 4 year olds (integrated where appropriate and possible with pre school childcare).
- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive pre school childcare for children under 5.
- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive Children's Centres ensuring congruency with resource centres, family centres, other agency centres and the Extended Schools programme.
- In liaison with the extended schools programme, developing and sustaining accessible and inclusive out of school childcare for children and young people aged 3-14 years and up to 16 years for those with special educational needs and/or with a disability and Looked After Children<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Early years provision may be located in or around the centre.

<sup>31</sup> This provision, as part of the core offer, applies only to the centres in the 30% most disadvantaged areas.

<sup>32</sup> Central Government directs that childcare must include children from these groups.

- Developing and sustaining the delivery of, on an accessible and inclusive basis, the extended schools core services, in particular liaison with the development of out of school childcare.
- Having strategic oversight over the development and delivery of Kent's national piloting of Parent Support Advisers<sup>33</sup>;
- Developing the early years, childcare and extended schools workforce through the provision of high quality training.
- Co-ordinating the provision of family support / social care and health support for families with children from conception to entry into school.
- The provision of information to parents/carers, settings, schools and all professionals, in line with legislation, government guidance and local initiatives, including contributing to the Kent Resource Directory.
- Monitoring and evaluating improvements in the quality of all provision and services integral to the terms of reference set out above.
- The monitoring of outputs in relation to the terms of reference set out above, and the evaluation of the impact of the Strategy in Kent as a whole

Membership of the Board includes:

- Representatives from Kent County Council (A KCC Member and officers from Children, Families & Education, Communities and Environment and Regeneration)
- The Health Services
- The Learning and Skills Council
- National Childminding Association
- Jobcentre Plus
- Kent Schools (Cluster Chair)
- Pre-school Learning Alliance
- Kent Children's Centres

The four working-groups and their areas of responsibilities are:

Childcare Development and Sustainability Group, responsible for steering the extension of the free entitlement to early learning and care for 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours, and to make it more flexible and to steer the provision of "sustainable childcare markets"<sup>34</sup>.

Children's Centres and Extended Services, (in liaison with the steering body for extended services in and around schools), responsible for working with a range of local partners to roll out Children's Centres and support the extended schools programme.

Workforce Development and Quality, responsible for setting clear expectations for children's development at 5 within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning what works, particularly in relation to underachieving groups and improving management and leadership through training and development.

Marketing and Information Group, responsible for a detailed childcare sufficiency assessment, taking in the needs of families on low incomes and families with children with disabilities, and, providing parents with the information and advice they need to

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<sup>33</sup> This initiative is around supporting families of children of statutory school age.

<sup>34</sup> In order that there is sufficient and accessible childcare for children aged 0-14, and up to 16 where a child has a SEN and/or disability and/or is looked after.

make choices for their families. This group will also look at how we communicate with the full range of stakeholders.

## **Glossary of terms**

**Children's centre** – a place where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and information.

**Children Families and Education** – a Directorate (department) of Kent County Council delivering education and welfare (social services) services to children and young people.

**Children's Trust** – the strategic and operational framework for all agencies to work together to improve the outcomes for children and young people

**Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)** – a single overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in the county

**CLL** - part of the Early Years Foundation Profile. The assessment scales which fall within Communication, Language and Literacy are Language for Communication and Thinking; Linking Sounds and Letters, Reading and, Writing.

**Cluster** – a group of Kent schools (Kent is made up of 23 clusters of schools).

**Department of Children, Schools and Families** - the Government department with responsibility for children's services, families, schools, 14-19 education, and the Respect Taskforce (responsibility for these services was with the former Department for Education and Skills).

**Early Years Professional Status** – a professional status for graduates working in early years settings.

**Every Child Matters** – the green paper that later became the Children Act 2004.

**Extended Schools** – schools who provide a range of services that go beyond the school day.

**EYFS** – Early Years Foundation Stage

**EYFE** – Early Years Free Entitlement.

**EY SENCO** – Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

**Free entitlement** – all three year old children are guaranteed a free early education entitlement, based on the Foundation Stage Curriculum for 38 weeks during each academic year for two years from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April or 1<sup>st</sup> September following their third birthday.

**FE and HE** – Further and Higher Education Colleges

**Jobcentre Plus** - provides help and advice on jobs and training for people who can work and financial help for those who cannot.

**Kent Children's Information Service** - this service provides free, confidential, impartial information and advice to parents, carers and members of the public about early education and childcare services in Kent through the Kent Children's Information Service (CIS). The service has information on all the registered childcare in Kent including early education and early years childcare provision.

**Kent County Council (KCC)** – the Local Authority which provides a range of services (statutory and non-statutory) to the community of Kent. This includes education and children's social services, which fall under the remit of the Children Families and Education Directorate.

**Kent County Council Directory of Early Years Providers** – this sets out information on which providers offer free early learning and care for all 3 and 4 year olds. All providers who offer the free entitlement will need to meet set conditions in order that all three and four year old children in Kent have access to a consistently high standard of early education and childcare.

**Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board** – a multi-agency board established to oversee KCC's commitments set out in this strategy.

**Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP)** – guidance by the former Department of Education and Skills (now known as the Department of Children, Schools and Families) on the Primary National Strategy: Curriculum & Standards

**Kent Early Support Programme** – education and children's social services (these are services from the Children Families and Education Directorate of KCC) working with health services to achieve the best possible outcomes for young children between 0-5 years who have profound, severe or complex needs.

**Kent Primary Strategy** – Kent County Council's review and agreements made in relation to the way primary schools work.

**Kent Quality Mark** – an accreditation mark covering all aspects of quality provided in early years settings.

**Key Stage 1** - key stage 1 covers children aged 5-7 years old in years 1 and 2 at school.

**LDD** – Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

**Local Authority** – a unitary, county, metropolitan or district council which provides statutory (and non statutory) services to the local community. In Kent it is Kent County Council that has responsibility for the provision of early education and childcare.

**Looked After Children** – children who are in the care of the Local Authority

**Lower Super Output Area** - Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geography designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics by the Office for National Statistics. They are made up of three layers: lower, middle and upper.

**Maintained Nursery Unit** – a school based premises for three year old children who are offered the place for either 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions (regardless of take up), maintained by the Local Authority.

**Next Four Years** – the aspirations and targets set by KCC between 2002 – 2006

**Non-maintained sector** – private, voluntary or independent providers or an accredited childminder, registered by their Local Authority to deliver the free entitlement. The premises of a non-maintained (PVI) provider may be on the site of a maintained school but is wholly independent of the maintained school.

**OfSTED** – Office for Standards in Education, the regulatory body and inspectorate for children and learners in England.

**OfSTED Childcare Register (OCR)** - a register of childcare providers. Childcare providers who care for children aged 5 and over will have to be registered on the OCR and those who care for children aged 8 and over will be able to apply to voluntarily to be registered.

**Parents and Carers** – adults with significant caring responsibilities. This might be, for example, birth mothers and fathers, adoptive parents, foster carers, stepparents, members of the extended family and grandparents.

**Portage** – a home visiting service to support children with LDD.

**PSED** – part of the Early Years Foundation Profile. The assessment scales which fall within Personal, Social and Emotional Development are Dispositions and Attitudes, Social Development; and, Emotional Development.

**PVI Provider** – any private, voluntary, independent provider or accredited childminder. Sometimes referred to as non-maintained providers or the non-maintained sector

**SEN** – Special Educational Needs.

**SENCO** – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

**Setting** – any maintained or non-maintained provision that provides early education and childcare.

**Special School** – provision for children with a severe learning or physical disability maintained by the Local Authority

**Statement of Special Educational Need** – a statement of special educational needs (SEN) may be issued following a statutory assessment. It details a child's special educational needs and the provision and resources required to meet these needs.

**SureStart** – the Government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child, bringing together, early education, childcare, health and family support.

**Sure Start Unit** – the Sure Start Unit is an integral part of the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The Unit works with local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local communities and voluntary and private sector organisations.

**Towards 2010** – Kent County Council’s aspirations and targets for 2006- 2010.

**Vulnerable child** – a child who is professionally identified as belonging to a group of children who are disadvantaged. For example, this **might** include:

- children with special educational needs, disabled children and children of disabled parents;
- children from some ethnic minority groups for example those from Gypsy, Roma, traveller heritage, Asylum Seekers and Refugees;
- children affected by domestic violence, temporary accommodation, offending parents and workless households;
- looked after children or those who are cared for by young carers;
- children of teenage parents; and,
- children in disadvantaged areas and those living with families below the poverty line.

**Young Carer** - a child or young person (under the age of 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility, which would usually be undertaken by an adult. This could be caring for a parent(s) or sibling(s).

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## **Acknowledgements**

The following organisations and individuals have contributed to the development of this strategy:

*To be completed*

## Consultation of EY Strategy

### Arrangements with Stakeholders

Period of consultation from 14 January to 4 April 2008

In general, most stakeholders will be contacted by letter or e-mail. In some cases consultation will be through specific meetings and bulletins. All Early Years (PVI) providers will be contacted by letter. **The strategy and questionnaire will be posted on the KCC website**

### Stakeholders to be involved

Stakeholder	Specific arrangements (where appropriate)
The Kent Children's Trust	January meeting (31 <sup>st</sup> )
CFE Policy Overview Committee	January meeting (30 <sup>th</sup> )
The Kent EYCESB	February meeting (15 <sup>th</sup> )
Health services/professionals	
JobCentre Plus	
PVI providers	3 conferences on 5, 8 and 11 March
Children's Centres	3 conferences on 5, 8 and 11 March
Schools	Primary Forum 4 February & e-bulletin
Partnership with Parents	To be agreed
Parenting networks	Meeting (Malling 21 <sup>st</sup> January and Swanley 31 <sup>st</sup> January) and through the Meet the Parents event in January
Church reps	February 25 <sup>th</sup>
The Race Equality Forum	Meeting - 12 February
Race Equality Council	Consultation web-site to BME groups
Equality staff groups	Meetings (as required)
KCC Officers/Heads of Service	
Other KCC Members	Members' Information Bulletin
Kent SACRE (Multi-faith group)	
Staff Unions	To be agreed





## KCC's Draft Strategy for Early Education and Childcare (2008 – 2013)

### Questions for stakeholders to complete

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND GIVE COMMENTS AS APPROPRIATE.

#### **Question 1:**

The draft strategy sets out the overall direction of how it will:

- Support disadvantaged groups
- Improve the quality of provision and support the early education and childcare workforce
- Secure sufficient and accessible early education and childcare
- Work with and support parents
- Facilitate integrated working between services.

Do you agree these are the right areas to include in the strategy?

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments:

#### **Question 2:**

The focus of the strategy is to improve the outcomes of all young children in Kent. Do you agree that in order to do this, part of what we do must be to take a targeted approach (this is summarised on page 7 of the strategy and for completeness is set out below/overleaf)?

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments:

The targeted areas to focus on are:

- Increasing the number of 3 and 4 year olds who are from disadvantaged backgrounds taking up their free entitlement to early education.
- Closing the gap in attainment for PSED and CLL of the Early Years Foundation Stage between those children who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those children who are not.
- Increasing the percentage of families who are from disadvantaged backgrounds using Children's Centres and that families who are not accessing the centres are visited as part of outreach work.
- Increasing the number of parents from disadvantaged families who are accessing information via the Kent Children's Information Service and that information on funding available for childcare is provided to this group of families.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate early education and childcare provision in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent and to specific groups such as teenage mothers.
- Increasing the number of appropriately qualified staff at level two and level three in early years settings, particularly in early years settings in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent.

**Question 3:**

Chapter 6 (and appendix 8) set out how the Local Authority will be taking the strategy forward. Do you agree this is the right framework for implementation?

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments:

**Please use this space if you wish to make any other comments.**

Comments:

**Finally, please tell us which organisation/interest you represent:**

Private, independent or voluntary provider of early education and childcare		School	
PTC/Health professional		Other government agency	
Parent		Community group	
KCC Member		Voluntary organisation	
Local Authority officer		Other (please specify)	

**Please return this form by 4 April 2008 to:**

Karen Noakes (room 2.70)  
**Kent County Council (Children, Families and Education)**  
**Sessions House**  
**County Hall**  
**Maidstone**  
**Kent ME14 1XQ**

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