

Extending Free Early Education to More Two Year Olds

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 15 October
2012

Your comments must reach us by that date.



Department
for Education

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name Anne Fox
Organisation (if applicable) The Communication Trust
Address: National Children's Bureau
8 Wakley Street
London EC1

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Simon Hampson by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or email:

TwoYearOldEarlyEducation.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the CYPFD Team by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark the category which best describes you as a respondent

<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Private/Voluntary provider - full day care	<input type="checkbox"/> Private/Voluntary provider - sessional
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> National organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Childminder
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained nursery school	<input type="checkbox"/> Networked childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained nursery class
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent school	x Other (please specify)	

Please Specify:

The Communication Trust

1 Do you agree that two year olds whose families meet the earnings and benefits criteria proposed in paragraph 4.1 should be eligible for free early education from September 2014?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

2 Do you agree that, from September 2014, the legal entitlement to early education should be extended to two year olds with statements of SEN (or an education, health and care plan) or in receipt of DLA?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

The Communication Trust welcomes the extension of the entitlement to two year olds with additional needs who may not qualify for a place under the criteria outlined in 4.1. However we consider that the proposed extension is too narrow. Only very small numbers of children aged two have a statement of SEN, but may still be identified by GPs, health visitors and other professionals as having additional needs and open to benefitting from the opportunity of 'early education'.

We consider that the legal entitlement should therefore be extended to any 2 year old child with an additional need that could affect their long term outcomes, who has been referred through a recognised multi-agency assessment process (CAF, TAC or an Education, Health and Care Plan).

3 Do you have any comments on the feasibility and appropriateness of extending the free entitlement to more children with SEND?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

The Communication Trust strongly supports the government's intention to extend the free entitlement to more children with SEND. However, this is likely to add to and reinforce the socio-demographic characteristics of two year olds who will be eligible for the free entitlement by virtue of the economic status of their families, based on the information included in the Early Education Pilot for Two Year Old Children evaluation (2009) i.e. a higher prevalence of longstanding illnesses and disabilities amongst both parents and children and the likelihood of children having more additional needs than in the general population, most commonly speech and language.

It will therefore be vital to address these issues alongside the feedback from and relating to parents of children with additional needs reported in the evaluation of the pilot scheme. This included:

- Higher rates of drop-out from taking up the free hours continuously over a 38 week period
- Parents whose child had SEN or a disability reporting that they would have liked more help and support; and better feedback
- Some parents whose child had SEN or a disability reporting that they did not think the setting and/or staff adequately met their child's specific needs.

The practical implications of these issues for local authorities includes:

- Promoting the *flexible* use of the free entitlement of the 570 hours of free early education, so that parents and children can benefit from 50 weeks' support, if this suits their family's needs better than a 'term time' only offer
- Promoting appropriate packages of early education which might include outreach/home-visiting to ensure that eligible disabled/SEN children or children with disabled parents can access their free entitlement
- Ensuring that providers are supported to deliver the free offer using Early Support resources and the Early Support , including key working
- Promoting and funding workforce development initiatives so that parents can have confidence that settings and staff can meet their child's needs
- Promoting a flexible approach to hourly rate payments to providers, to recognise the additional support, staff and resources that may be needed to provide good quality experiences for two year olds with additional needs and SEND

Given that speech and language (SLC) was the most commonly identified 'additional need' in the evaluation of the pilot for two year olds, TCT is particularly concerned that workforce development initiatives that support SLC are prioritised in the roll out of the extended 2 year old offer and promoted by government. The crucial importance of language and communication for children in the very early years is well evidenced:

- Language development at age 2 has been shown to strongly predict children's performance on entry to primary schoolⁱ and is also linked to outcomes into adulthoodⁱⁱ
- Children with poor language skills in their early years are 6 times more likely to have reading difficultiesⁱⁱⁱ
- Speech, language and communication needs impact on attainment, behaviour, social and emotional development^{iv}
- In areas of social disadvantage around 50% of children^v are likely to have delayed language, impacting on their current and future learning and development – in many of these areas however, children's needs have not been identified.

Language and communication are now one of the three prime areas of the EYFS, raising its profile and importance for settings. To gain good or outstanding judgements for Ofsted, and so to be able to deliver the 2 year entitlement, settings will need to demonstrate effective progress for children in this area. Evidence shows that outcomes for children are better where staff are more qualified^{vi} so for children to make appropriate progress in language and communication and to narrow the gap in this prime area, a skilled, knowledgeable and qualified workforce is essential.

4 Do you agree that, from September 2014, two year olds who have left care through an adoption order, special guardianship or residence order, should be eligible for the free early education entitlement?

Comments:

Yes

5 Please use this space to give us your views on how funding for early education for two year olds should be distributed to local authorities.

Comments:

In the absence of ring fencing of the funding for two year olds in the Direct Schools Grant, it would be helpful if the DfE could share their calculation of a 'notional cost per place' for the extended 2 year offer. This would enable those responsible for delivering the target number of places in local authorities to negotiate the appropriate funding from the DSG at School Forum level and avoid the situation in which, at a time of extreme budget restraints, the two year funding may be redirected into other areas.

6 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make.

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Education we carry out research and consultations on many different topics. Your views are valuable to us; would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, telephone: 0370 000 2288 or email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 15 October 2012

Send by post to: Two Year Old Entitlement - Framework Team, Foundation Years: Free Early Education and Funding Division, Department for Education, Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: TwoYearOldEarlyEducation.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

ⁱ Roulstone et al (2011), *Investigating the role of language in Children's Early educational outcomes* Research report DFE – RR134

ⁱⁱ Feinstein L (2003) *Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970* *Economica* vol 70

ⁱⁱⁱ **Boyer E** (1991) *Ready To Learn*, Carnegie Foundation, New Jersey

^{iv} Hartshorne M, (2006) *The Cost to the Nation* I CAN

^v Locke A., Ginsborg J. and Peers I. (2002) *Development and Disadvantage: Implications for Early Years* IJCLD Vol 27 No 1

^{vi} Sylva, K & Melhuish, E, Sammons, P, Siraj-Blatchford, I, Taggart, B (2003) *The Effective Provision of Pre School Education (EPPE) Project*