

# In more detail...

## New Duty 1

### To improve outcomes for under 5s and reduce inequalities

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to improve the outcomes for all young children, reduce inequalities, and to ensure that there is sufficient high quality integrated early years provision and childcare for parents locally.

Local authorities are expected to work with local private, voluntary and independent sector providers to meet local needs – and to manage the market.

#### Five key outcomes

The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

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

Local authorities, working with their Health and Jobcentre Plus partners, must plan and deliver early childhood services which are integrated in order to provide a seamless experience for parents and children that makes a real difference to children's outcomes.

Local authorities will need to ensure that early childhood services are integrated, develop a children's centre for every community (3,500 centres by 2010) and make sure that every school provides access to the core offer of extended services by 2010 – for primary schools this includes providing access to quality childcare from 8am–6pm, 48 weeks a year.

## New Duty 2

### Secure sufficient childcare

The Act places a duty on local authorities to secure – in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector – sufficient childcare for all parents who choose to work or are in training in preparation for work.

#### Delivering sufficient childcare through the market – giving parents choice

*Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen* (DfES, April 2006) sets out an action plan for the implementation of the Childcare Act. The Action Plan outlines key steps to securing sufficiency and managing the market. These are:

- Analyse demand: what do parents want?
- Map supply: what is available and what capacity is there for change?
- Map supply to demand
- Facilitate the market to secure sufficient childcare:
  - closing gaps and removing overlaps
  - enabling providers to expand/enter the market
  - increasing affordability

Childcare will only be considered sufficient if it is meeting the needs of the community in general and in particular those families on lower incomes and those with additional needs, including disabled children.

## New Duty 3

### To provide information, advice and assistance

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to provide information on childcare and other services, facilities or publications which may benefit parents, prospective parents, children or young people. Where appropriate, they must also provide additional advice and assistance to parents on childcare in their area through a brokerage service for parents finding it difficult to identify suitable care.

#### A broader range of information

From April 2008 local authorities must provide parents with a broader range of information to help them support children and young people aged 0–19. The information should include:

- **Childcare:** information on all childcare provision including type of provision, opening times, age range and registration status
- **Information on local services** including education, health, leisure and parenting, and details of type of service, who to contact, opening hours, cost, etc.
- **Information on national services** including websites, helplines and written materials. The aim is to signpost parents to the most suitable provision.

#### Accessibility

Information must be available to all parents, including those who might otherwise have difficulty accessing services they need. It should be accessible in places parents go, including children's centres and extended schools, and in different media and formats. The service should reach out to disadvantaged families to help them overcome barriers to access and should ensure that information is available, among other groups, to black and ethnic minorities, young parents, fathers, Travellers, parents for whom English is an additional language and parents of disabled children.

## Simplified regulatory framework

### Early Years Foundation Stage

The Act introduces an integrated framework for learning, development and care for young children – the Early Years Foundation Stage, bringing together the Foundation Stage, the Birth to Three Matters Framework, and National Standards for Day Care and Childminding. The aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to ensure that providers deliver high quality integrated early education and care for children aged 0–5 years.

### Early Years Register

The current Ofsted registration and inspection arrangements will continue until 31 August 2008; after that date, all providers caring for children under compulsory school age will be registered on the new Early Years Register.

### Ofsted Childcare Register

All childcare settings for children of school age will be required to register on the new Ofsted Childcare Register after September 2008 if they care for children from the start of compulsory school age until the age of 7. Since April 2007 other providers may join the register on a voluntary basis, including activity based schemes and nannies for children of any age, and those caring for children from the age of 8.

## Ofsted Childcare Register

The Childcare Act 2006 includes provisions to establish a general register (the Ofsted Childcare Register – OCR) for providers of childcare for children from the start of compulsory school age to the age of 17. Providers who care for children from the start of compulsory age until the age of 7 will be required to be registered; providers who care solely for children aged 8 and over can choose to be registered. Providers exempted from joining the Early Years Register or the compulsory element of the OCR from September 2008 and providers not currently required to register with Ofsted can apply to be registered. All providers must meet essential standards in order to be registered (these will include CRB checks, first aid, and health and safety).

Providers will need to confirm annually that they are continuing to meet the required standards. In addition, Ofsted will check compliance against these standards through a risk-based approach to inspection. Visits will be triggered by complaints or concerns, as well as carried out on the basis of random spot checks. Providers that are judged as not meeting the standards

can be removed from the register. Provision made directly by schools for children of 3 and over on the school site will not be required to be registered from September 2008 but will be judged against the same standards through the school inspection system. Schools are being advised that they should only work with childcare providers who are on the Ofsted Childcare Register.

There will be an initial registration fee to join the register and a yearly fee thereafter to remain registered. All childcare providers should join the Ofsted Childcare Register as parents will not be eligible for financial help with the costs of childcare through Working Tax Credits and employer vouchers unless the provision is registered. Local authorities will also distinguish between providers that are registered and those who are not when they provide information to parents about the childcare in their area.

## Children's workforce development

A well qualified, skilled and motivated workforce will be key to improving quality in early education and care. The Children's Workforce Development Council is leading on development work to raise skill levels across the children's workforce, including:

- Early Years Professional Status – with the aim of an expert practitioner at graduate level in all Sure Start Children's Centres offering early years provision by 2010, and in every full daycare setting by 2015
- A higher proportion of the workforce in all early years settings qualified to at least Level 3 by 2008
- £250m Transformation Fund over two years to support this work, and to provide a Recruitment Incentive of £3,000 each year for full day care settings in the private and voluntary sector to employ graduate professional leaders for the first time who are aspiring to achieve Early Years Professional Status within two years; and a Quality Premium of £5,000 each year (more in London)
- The National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership – a management and leadership qualification for integrated settings. Applications can be made online at [www.ncsl.org.uk/npqicl](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/npqicl)

For more information, contact your Local Authority Training Officer.

To find out more about a career in Early Years and Childcare contact your Local Authority Childcare Recruitment Team. Find their details by freephoning on 0800 99 66 00 or visit [www.childcarecareers.gov.uk](http://www.childcarecareers.gov.uk)

## Working in Early Years

It's not just **child's** play

## Supporting development

4Children's dedicated team of Regional Development Managers and network of specialist consultants offer strategic support and operational advice on developing children's centres, extended school services, youth services and wider support for childcare. To find out more please contact 4Children on 020 7512 2100. The Regional Development Managers contact details are listed at [www.4Children.org.uk/extendedschools](http://www.4Children.org.uk/extendedschools)

In order to support schools as they develop extended services, 4Children, ContinYou and TDA Development are working together to help support the delivery of high quality, sustainable provision which meets the needs of children, families and the community.

## Information point

The **Childcare Act 2006** can be found at [www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)

**Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen – An Action Plan for the ten year strategy** can be found at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

### 4Children

The national charity dedicated to creating opportunities and building futures for all children  
Tel: 020 7512 2100  
[www.4Children.org.uk](http://www.4Children.org.uk)

### ChildcareLink

Information about local childcare services  
Tel: 0800 096 0296  
[www.childcarelink.gov.uk](http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk)

**Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)**  
[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

### ContinYou

Creates learning programmes and services that offer fresh opportunities to people who have gained least from formal education and training  
[www.continyou.org](http://www.continyou.org)

**Criminal Records Bureau**  
Tel: 0870 9090 811  
[www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

### EYFS

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs)

### Every Child Matters

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

**National Association for Children's Information Services (NACIS)**  
[www.nacis.org.uk](http://www.nacis.org.uk)

### National Childminding Association

Tel: 0845 880 0044  
[www.ncma.gov.uk](http://www.ncma.gov.uk)

### National Day Nurseries Association

Tel: 0870 770 0449  
[www.ndna.gov.uk](http://www.ndna.gov.uk)

### Ofsted - The Office for Standards in Education

Tel: 020 7421 6800  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### TDA Development

Supporting schools in the development of core extended services  
Community Consultation toolkit available to download  
Tel: 020 7979 2850  
[www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org)

### Teachernet

The extended schools website for links to guidance, research, case studies and other information  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools)

**The National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)**  
[www.ncsl.org.uk/npqicl](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/npqicl)

### Helplines

**Tax Credit Helpline:**  
0845 300 3900

**Ofsted Helpline:**  
0845 601 4771

**ChildcareLink:**  
0800 096 0296

**4Children Information Helpline:** 020 7512 2100

# Policy into Practice

Childcare and extended services – briefing for new and existing childcare providers

Issue 4. 2007

Supported by

**SureStart**

## Childcare Act 2006

What does it mean for childcare providers?

Welcome to Issue 4 of *Policy into Practice*, on the Childcare Act 2006. This landmark legislation is already transforming childcare provision and children's services in England.

The Act provides the legal framework for the Government's Ten Year Strategy for Childcare, it reforms and simplifies the regulatory framework, and places new duties on local authorities to:

- Improve outcomes for under 5s and reduce inequalities;
- Secure sufficient childcare to meet needs; and
- Provide access to information and advice for parents.

It is England's first Childcare Act, and the first time that local authorities have a duty to secure – in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector – sufficient childcare for all parents who choose to work or are in training in preparation for work.

Local authorities will work in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector to ensure a diverse and sustained childcare market.

*"We have a real chance here to make a difference to children's lives for generations to come, to work together – all of us – national and local Government, voluntary and private sector, parents and children – to deliver for the future. It's an opportunity we must all seize."*

*"This is an historical and radical piece of legislation – the first solely dedicated to early years and childcare – that redraws the boundaries of the welfare state, ensuring that early years services are at the heart of what families can expect in their local areas."*

**Beverley Hughes MP, Minister for Children, Young People and Families**

### Inside this issue:

- **Poster: What does the Childcare Act 2006 mean to me?**
- **In more detail... improving outcomes, securing sufficient childcare, regulatory framework changes**
- **Children's workforce development**

