

Early Childhood Forum response to the Schools Forum consultation

26 August 2009

The Early Childhood Forum is a coalition of 58 professional associations, voluntary organisations and interest groups united in their concern about the well-being, learning and development of young children from birth to eight.

ECF has five central areas of work which form the basis of its policy agenda:

- Championing children's rights and entitlements
- Supporting training, development and education of early childhood practitioners and all who work with children and their families
- Working in partnership
- Addressing inequalities and valuing diversity
- Evaluating practice and ensuring quality

The Early Childhood Forum believes that representation on schools forums should be proportionate to the number of children it represents (not full time equivalent), rather than the funding provided, to enable all parties to take a full and active role. On most schools forums, there is currently a predominance of representatives from secondary and primary schools and little voice of early years. Our proposal would bring early years in line with primary and secondary schools whose schools forums representation already operate on proportionate pupil numbers.

In part 2 of the accompanying notes, it mentions that the voices of PVIs are sometimes not heard sufficiently owing to current schools forum regulations. ECF represents PVI sector organisations including Pre-School Learning Alliance and National Day Nurseries Association and we've found their experiences often reflect this.

In terms of representation, ECF believes it is necessary to look at the bigger picture. Having a representative for each type of provision within every locality team on schools forums could lead to them becoming unmanageable in terms of size, depending on the local authority. However, we would propose there being more than one representative from the voluntary sector, private sector and children's centres to ensure all parties involved within early years are able to be an active partner and

represent their peers. This is particularly pertinent with the Single Funding Formula now being controlled by the Schools Forum.

Finally we agree with your suggested solution to place a requirement on schools forum, when they are consulted on arrangements for the single funding formula, to have regard to the LA's duties to secure sufficiency of places and improve outcomes.

Early Childhood Forum Members

4Children

Action for Children

Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP)

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

British Association of Community Child Health (BACCH)

Campaign for Advancement of State Education (CASE)

Children in Scotland (CiS)

Children's Society

Children in Wales (CiW)

Children's Links

Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE)

Council for Disabled Children (CDC)

Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA)

Daycare Trust (DCT)

Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network

Early Education

Early Years (formally NIPPA)

Early Years Equality (EYE)

Fatherhood Institute (formally Fathers Direct) (co-opted member)

Full Time Mothers

Forum for Maintained Nursery Schools

High/Scope UK

ICAN

Learning Through Landscapes (LTL)
Local Authority Early Years Network (LAEYN)
Mencap
Montessori Education UK
National Academy for Parenting Practitioners (NAPP)
National Association of Education Inspectors, Advisors & Consultants (ASPECT)
National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
National Association for Primary Education (NAPE)
National Association of Nurseries in Colleges & Universities (NANCU)
National Autistic Society (NAS)
National Children's Bureau (NCB)
National Campaign for Nursery Education (NCNE)
National Childminding Association (NCMA)
National Council for Parent Teacher Associations (NCPTA)
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)
National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)
National Network Of Children's Information Services (NACIS)
National Portage Association (NPA)
National Union Teachers (NUT)
Parenting UK
Parents for Inclusion
Play England (formally Children's Play Council)
Preschool Learning Alliance (PLA)
REU (formerly Race Equality Unit)
Refugee Council
Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
Save the Children (SCF)
Scope
Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF)
Training, Advancement & Co-operation in Teaching Young Children (TACTYC)
UNISON
Voice - Union for Education Professionals (formally PAT / PANN)

What About the Children (WATCh)

World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)

Young Minds