

*“There is no more important or privileged role than supporting children and families through these vital foundation years. This statement is only the beginning and we look forward to working with you to make a difference.”*

**Sarah Teather, Children’s Minister and Anne Milton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health**

*Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*, describes the system needed to make *Families in the Foundation Years* a reality, building on what has already been achieved. This guide identifies the key issues raised in the document.

## Section 2: The Importance of the foundation years

- There needs to be a new joint approach across foundation years services. (p13)
- The primary aim of the foundation years is promoting a child’s physical, emotional, cognitive and social development so that all children have a fair chance to succeed at school and in later life. (p13)
- We want to encourage improved advice and support to help with parenting. (p13)
- Working with employers to improve the skills and qualification levels of the workforce and to support the development of confident leadership. (p13)
- Establish a strong relationship between central government, commissioners and providers, and at a local level, based on effective collaboration, targeting of resources, and strong systems of accountability. (p14)

## Section 3: Focusing on child development

- The health visitor workforce will be increased by 4,200 by 2015. (p17)
- A commitment to retaining the universal free entitlement for all three and four year olds. (p22)
- A slimmed-down EYFS to be introduced in September 2012. (p23)
- A strengthen quality criteria for free early education for three and four year olds from September 2012. (p27)
- A new entitlement to free early education the most disadvantaged two year olds nationally from September 2013. (p29)
- Consultation in the autumn on a new Code of Practice covering the entitlements for three and four year olds. (p30)
- Consultation on a more flexible free entitlement. (p30)
- A commitment to promoting a diverse and vibrant early education sector and encouraging new forms of provision. (p33)
- A proposal to develop a new early education and childcare covenant. (p34)

## Section 4: Parents and families at the heart of services

- A “Family Friendly” scheme designed to encourage organisations to commit to put families at the heart of their business. (p37)
- More flexible parental leave so that parents develop positive patterns of shared caring from the start. (p38)
- A range of expert providers funded by DfE to provide relationship support to people who need it. (p38)
- A commissioned evaluation of relationship support interventions to ensure evidence-based decisions about whether and how to invest in relationship support. (p39)
- A national family support services online and by telephone from July 2011. (p40)
- Local commissioners to choose proven parenting programmes to meet local needs (p42)
- Encourage more parental and community involvement in children’s centres. (p43)
- Expert providers in the voluntary sector to deliver training to staff in children’s centres to help them recognise and respond effectively to families experiencing relationship difficulties and separation. (p44)
- By 2014 we intend that all families whose child has an Education, Health and Care Plan will be entitled to a personal budget. (p46)
- Introduction of the Universal Credit from 2013. (p47)

## Section 5: Intervening early

- All nurseries, and childminders are to give parents a short written summary of their child’s progress at around the age of two, from September 2012, we intend to explore options for bringing this together with the Healthy Child Programme review at two to two-and-a-half into a single integrated review from 2015. (p52)
- We are exploring how to extend the package of support offered to areas developing community budgets for families with multiple problems to improve early intervention. (p53)
- Doubling of the number of places on the Family Nurse Partnership to 13,000 by 2015. (p54)
- Retention of a vibrant network of high-quality children’s centres. (p55)
- Consultation on revised statutory guidance on children’s centres in 2011. (p55)
- Develop the evidence base for outreach and family support; build on previous work on job roles to develop greater professional identity; and consider whether there is a role for national standards for outreach. (p57)

## Section 6: Skilled professionals (p59)

- Specialist family support and outreach staff should be graduate-led. (p60)
- There should be strong professional leadership working to clear national standards, as well as a more collaborative multi-professional and multidisciplinary approach to workforce planning. (p61)
- DfE will support development in the early education and child care sectors by: funding the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and the New Leaders in Early Years programmes; working with the sector to explore how we might encourage a greater involvement of business in the early years; making early years workers a central part of the remit of the new workforce agency; and, establishing the National College as the new Leadership Agency. (p63-40)
- Review of the Foundation Years Qualifications. (p64)
- Tackle the gender imbalance in the sector and make early education and childcare a viable career choice for all. (p65)
- Set up a national network of 10 Early Years Teaching Centres from 2011 to 2013. (p66)
- Over time, all existing, new and aspirant children’s centre leaders should undertake NPQICL (or an equivalent qualification). (p67)

## Section 7: A strong relationship with the sector

- Health and Wellbeing Boards will assess local needs and develop a shared strategy to address them, providing a strategic framework for commissioning local services, including children’s services. (p69)
- The Government is committed to enabling VCS organisations to participate actively in policy making and implementation. (p72)
- Consideration of a lighter-touch inspection framework. (p73)
- Trial of children’s centre payment by results to generate an evidence base which will inform wider roll out of payment by results from 2013-14. (p74)
- Local authorities are now required to provide information about their expenditure on children’s centres. (p74)

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