

Early Start 4 Scotland

Improving access to quality Early Years Education

Dr Azeem Ibrahim



Contents

Executive Summary	5
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	7
2.1 Focus on children or on enabling adults to return to work?	8
2.2 Child Care or Education?.....	8
2.3 Comparative Outcomes	9
Chapter 2: Current Models of Early Years Education	12
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 Australia	13
3.2.1 Overview.....	13
3.2.2 Funding.....	14
3.2.3 Organisation	15
3.2.4 Strengths and Weaknesses.....	15
3.3 Finland	16
3.3.1 Overview.....	16
3.3.2 Funding.....	18
3.3.3 Organisation	18
3.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses.....	19
3.4 Ireland.....	19
3.4.1 Overview.....	19
3.4.2 Funding.....	20
3.4.3 Organisation	20
3.4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses.....	21
3.5 Scotland.....	21
3.5.1 Overview.....	23
3.5.2 Funding.....	24
3.5.3 Organisation	26
3.5.4 Strengths and Weaknesses.....	27
3.6 Summary.....	28
3.6.1 Different Models, Similar Goals?	28
3.6.2 For the Child or to allow Adults to enter work?	29
3.6.3 Funding Systems and the Provision of Early Years Education.....	29
Chapter 3: Policy Proposals.....	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Volume of Provision	31
4.3 Administrative Arrangements	32
4.4 Funding.....	32
4.5 Local Authorities to become providers	33
Summary and Conclusions	37
References	39

Dear Friends,



It is universally accepted that investment in the early years of a child's life creates long-term social and economic benefits. Countless studies over the past twenty years or more have provided abundant proof that children should be at the heart of future development strategies for civil societies engaged in the pursuit of social justice and economic opportunity.

Scotland clearly acknowledges the case for effective early years support but it is not yet clear on how to provide this efficiently or comprehensively. The current approach of over-reliance on private sector provision has resulted in high costs and variable quality with gaps in availability in certain areas. With this patchwork of provision and fragility of funding, there is no immediate vision of making more and better childcare and education accessible for more, or indeed, all children in Scotland.

To approach a solution to meet this need, the Early Start 4 Scotland report urges the Scottish Government to implement the practical strategy of making use of existing spare capacity in primary schools to provide four-year-olds with an excellent and equitable transition to more formal education. This can be achieved by shifting the responsibility of local authorities from commissioning provision to actually providing early years education for four year-olds using existing physical space. Funding streams will need to be re-organised and pre-school curriculums identified, based on the many successful transition programs already established by some Scottish primary schools.

Policies have often been dictated by the provision of childcare so that parents can return to work, rather than the needs of children. Health, welfare, child protection and education are all too often treated as separate issues within different departments. This fragmentation leads to duplication and inefficiencies and an integrated approach is therefore one of the recommendations of this report.

The Scotland Institute has commissioned this report following earlier studies of poverty and social exclusion in Scotland. Comparisons with other countries have led to useful guides to other models of the funding and provision of early years childcare and education. Economic models exist which predict the cost savings to the economy and society as a whole and the many benefits of early intervention and prevention strategies by investment in the early years.

Our recommendations are child-centred however, as Scotland's future involves society's more comprehensive attitude to childcare, its central role in a just society and the extent of society's toleration of children living in poverty. A philosophy of excellence, equity and inclusion should be the basis of future integrated policies for Scotland's children and it is with this in mind that the Scotland Institute presents this report.

Dr Azeem Ibrahim
Executive Chairman
The Scotland Institute

About the Author

Dr Azeem Ibrahim is the Executive Chairman of the Scotland Institute. He completed his PhD from the University of Cambridge and served as an International Security Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and World Fellow at Yale University. He is also a Magnusson Fellow at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Executive Summary

The case for pre-school, early years education, is clear. What is less clear is how to ensure the provision meets the stated goals. A pan-European longitudinal study of young children's development between the ages of 3 and 7 years confirmed that at least some pre-school experience, compared to none, enhances children's development¹. In particular, this argued that:

- From age 2 all children benefit from preschool;
- The quality of pre-school matters (ie low quality provision is as bad as no provision);
- Part-time attendance is of equal benefit to full-time;
- The benefits of quality pre-school experiences persist until at least the end of primary school;
- High quality pre-school experience can protect a child from the consequences of attending a less effective school when they move to formal education.

Overall, there is strong evidence that once a child falls behind in education; they are likely to remain behind. One consequence of poverty and social exclusion is that young people are already effectively segregated by social class at the commencement of formal primary schooling. Furthermore once children perceive they have fallen behind they are more likely to become disruptive leading to further problems with educational attainment². Therefore the earlier a child's needs can be identified, the earlier intervention strategies can be initiated, creating better chances for the child's future successful development.

This report looks at current practice in terms of pre-school provision in Scotland and compares our approach to three other OECD countries – Australia, Finland and Ireland. To some extent there is a consensus, in that all four countries acknowledge the importance of early years education as a key means to offset the consequences of poverty and social exclusion. However, in three countries, local authorities have a role as a commissioner of provision, and, especially in

1 Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B. & Elliot, K. 2003. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from the Pre-School period. Nottingham: DfES.

2 Barrett, P. & Turner, C. 2001. Prevention of anxiety symptoms in primary school children: Preliminary results from a universal school-based trial. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, **40**, 399-410, Horowitz, J. L. & Garber, J. 2006. The prevention of depressive symptoms in Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of Counselling and Clinical Psychology*, **74**, 401-415, The Lord Laming 2009. Children in England: A Progress Report. London: The House of Commons.

Scotland, the effectiveness of this is undermined as they have little clear idea just what is the level of need³. The exception is Finland where the local authorities have a requirement to provide services⁴ and these have to be comprehensive. There is a commitment to parental choice - those who choose to can access funding for home based child care or use the private sector but provision is mainly state provided and far cheaper both for parents and in terms of social costs than the other three countries.

The Irish model has an interesting approach of making use of under-utilised primary school buildings to provide focussed support for those children in most need⁵. Our analysis, reported in detail in this report suggests this is feasible in Scotland too. There is substantial under-usage of the Primary School estate⁶ and our estimate is this, feasibly, could accommodate 100,000 more pupils than are currently enrolled⁷. Since there are currently some 95,000 pre-school pupils, this suggests that shifting the role of local authorities is feasible.

If they become providers, then many of the current gaps in provision can be addressed as can the paradox between the high costs and low quality of much private sector provision in Scotland⁸.

The final recommendation in this report is to bring responsibility for all aspects of pre-school child support within a single Government Department. At the moment this is fragmented between education provision and welfare and social support. In reality, the two themes are connected, and there is strong evidence that integration yields better outcomes and reduces the scope for problems to be missed due to complex departmental and funding boundaries⁹.

3 Children in Scotland 2011. The cost of childcare in Scotland: A special report, Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

4 Heinämäki, L. 2011. *Early Childhood Education in Finland*. Potsdam: Liberal Institute.

5 NCCA 2009. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education Audit: Similarities and differences*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

6 Scottish Government. 2011c. *Primary school capacity by local authority* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Pubs-Pre-SchoolEducation> [Accessed 23 July 2013].

7 Scottish Government 2012b. *Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

8 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

9 Deacon, S. 2011. *Joining the Dots: A better start for Scotland's children*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There is substantial evidence that young children in Scotland are already unequal in terms of their educational achievement by the time they enter formal schooling at five. This disadvantage simply accumulates across the rest of their period in primary and secondary education. Thus there is a need, as acknowledged by the Scottish Government, to ensure that a child's experiences before the commencement of formal education do not determine their subsequent life chances.

This report reviews practice in three different educational systems (Australia, Finland and Ireland) where, in different ways, the problem of providing high quality early education has been a major policy focus. This is then contrasted with the current approach in Scotland to identify gaps and weaknesses. In doing so, it is important not to extract specific programmes or ideas out of context. Scandinavian approaches have long been of interest to British politicians of left and right, and there is a regrettable tendency to extract policy proposals without regard to context¹⁰.

Investment in early years education is a powerful tool to address social inequality and reduce the long-term societal and personal cost. What this report explores is the policy environment that will enable the best use to be made of such funding so that children are the primary beneficiaries. A report by the New Economics Foundation¹¹ is stark in its conclusions when they compared the difference between the UK approach and the universalist model still in use in Scandinavia:

- The cost to the UK economy of continuing to address current levels of social problems will amount to almost £4 trillion over a 20 year period. This includes addressing problems such as crime, mental ill health, family breakdown, drug abuse and obesity;
- The cost to the UK economy of moving to a preventative approach, through a combination of universal childcare, targeted early childhood interventions and paid parental leave, would total £620 billion over 20 years
- This investment could address as much as £1.5 trillion of the cost of social problems identified.

10 Heinämäki, L. 2011. Early Childhood Education in Finland. Potsdam: Liberal Institute.

11 NEF 2009. Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all. London: New Economics Foundation.

The Scottish Government has confirmed this analysis: “Early intervention ... can significantly help to prevent or reduce the likelihood of children developing future social problems that may otherwise have necessitated an intervention by the state. The approach has the potential to save relevant public bodies significant sums of money as the number of interventions that they have to provide is thereby significantly reduced¹²”.

■ 2.1 *Focus on children or on enabling adults to return to work?*

Policy in terms of early years childcare has become confused in the UK as it is increasingly¹³ framed less in terms of what is good for children and more in terms of ensuring parental (and most particularly single parent) return to work. New Labour and the Coalition Government both emphasised this aspect and framed the debate less in terms of provision of quality childcare and more in terms of reducing the costs of such childcare. Thus the Westminster Government has recently attempted to dilute educational standards and the ratio between children and carers in an attempt to reduce the costs of the UK’s exceptionally expensive privatised approach to childcare provision. The focus on parental entry into work means there is a growing perception that in the UK “children may be seen as an obstacle to women’s work, with child care considered as a necessary evil”¹⁴.

■ 2.2 *Child Care or Education?*

One part of the debate on early years education is whether the focus for 3-4 year olds should be on education or on structured and supported play. The UK has one of the lowest school start ages in Europe and this early commencement of formal education is also marked by the formal testing of children.

12 Scottish Parliament 2011. Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament., para 33

13 Daycare Trust. 2010. *Lone parent welfare reform will fail without investment in childcare* [Online]. Available: [http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-\\$21385231\\$475087.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-$21385231$475087.htm) [Accessed 15 November 2010], Department of Work and Pensions. 2012. *Get Britain Working* [Online]. London: Department of Work and Pensions. Available: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/get-britain-working/> [Accessed 21 August 2012].

14 OECD 2006. Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development , p. 22

Table 1: Compulsory age of starting school in European countries

Starting Age	Countries:
Four	Ireland
Five	England, Malta, Netherlands, Scotland, Wales
Six	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain
Seven	Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Sweden

Only Ireland has an earlier start date than the UK and most European countries do not commence formal schooling until children are aged six or over. Equally, the English education approach has increasingly been conditioned by repeated testing which tends to emphasise learning over play and social interaction in the early years.

Childcare, on the other hand, works on the basis of “play with a purpose” whereas good practice in a more formal setting involves more teacher involvement and activities based on a sound educational purpose¹⁵. More generally there are two major concerns about the consequences of a too early shift from play-based activity to formal education:

- That teaching more formal skills early (in school) gives children an initial academic advantage, but that this advantage is not sustained in the longer term.
- There are some suggestions that an early introduction to a formal curriculum may increase anxiety and have a negative impact on children’s self esteem and motivation to learn.

Scotland has a unique opportunity to implement an integrated curriculum for four-year-olds of play with a purpose based on sound educational principles.

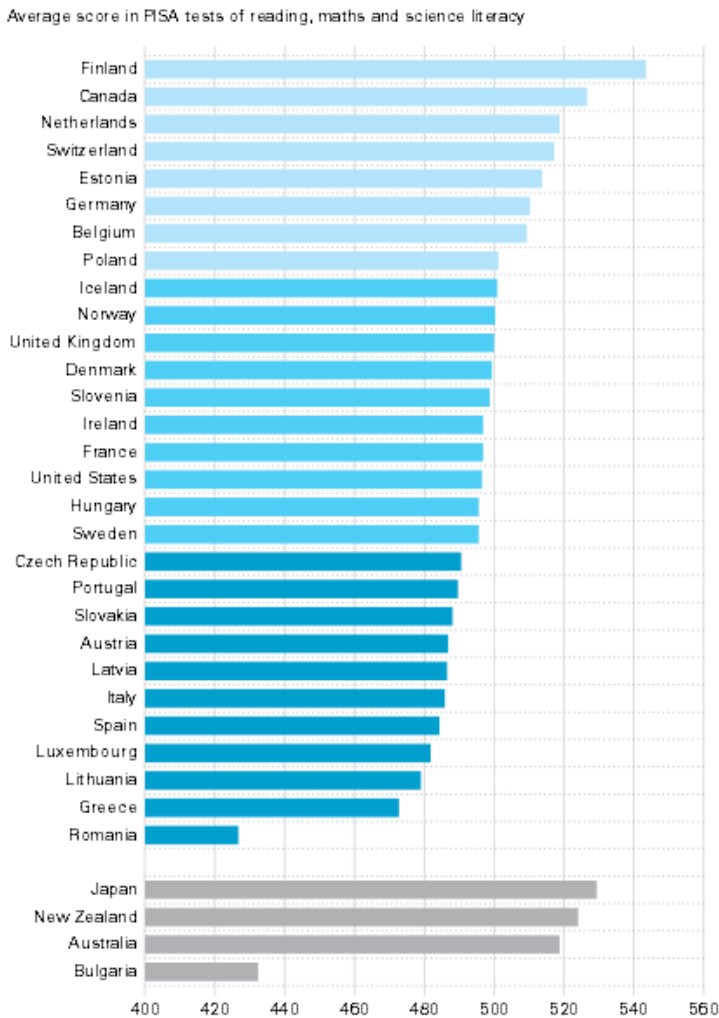
2.3 Comparative Outcomes

One enduring challenge in this field is to estimate the effectiveness of various approaches. Few other countries share the UK’s obsession with testing children

15 NCCA 2009. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education Audit: Similarities and differences. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

at an early age¹⁶ so in terms of attainment comparative data tends to exist at the end of primary schooling (ie some 5 years beyond the period that is the focus of early years education). However, some comparative measures do exist. For example, UNICEF, in its *Innocenti* report series, seeks to measure child well being in developed countries¹⁷. One useful measure is educational progression relative to other countries. Against this Finland is ranked fourth (the Netherlands is top), Ireland is 16th and the UK, as a whole, is 23rd and children in the UK underperform the average by 1%. Unfortunately, Australia is not included in this particular dataset. Using the same report, in terms of educational achievement at 15, Finland is top of the list and:

Figure 1: Educational Achievement at 15¹⁸



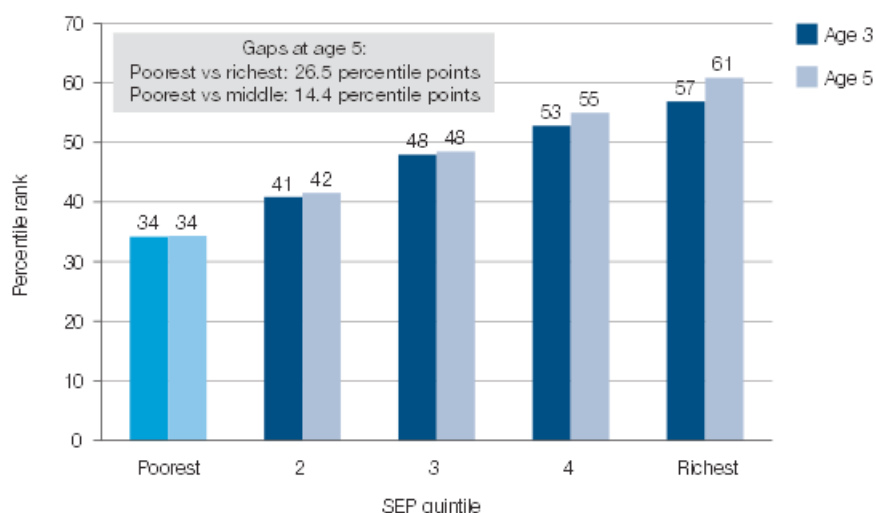
16 Riggall, A. & Sharp, C. 2008. *The Structure of Primary Education: England and Other countries*. Cambridge: NFER.

17 Adamson, P. 2013. *Innocenti Report Card 11: Child Well-being in rich companies*. Florence: UNICEF.

18 Ibid. p. 20

Clearly a lot more than the varying quality of pre-school education affects outcomes at 15 and it is noticeable that countries that otherwise adopt a similar approach to Finland in terms of early years do less well by the time the children are aged 15. Denmark and Sweden¹⁹ in particular, lag the UK at this stage in average child progression. At age 10, incomplete data using comparative tests indicates that Finland does best, followed by the UK, Australia and Ireland²⁰. Again, a number of factors other than the quality of pre-school education come into play but it does confirm the wider evidence of the efficacy of the Finnish approach. Equally such comparators take little account of variation within countries on the basis of social class, parental income and whether or not children are in care. Here, the evidence is consistent that unless action is taken to offset the problems of low family income, such children are disadvantaged even before they start formal schooling²¹. In this case, in the UK it is clear that by age 3 a gap has been created:

Figure 2: Child cognitive outcomes at ages 3 and 5 by social class²²



Note: The cognitive outcomes used at both ages are the BAS Naming Vocabulary, which are both expressed as percentiles of age-normalised scores. Due to discontinuities in the age-normalised score, the average percentile is not 50.5 in either case.

The damning implication of the flaws in the UK approach to pre-school education is shown in the relative stagnation of cognitive ability for children from poorer families between three and five, compared to the relative growth for the best off.

19 Brink, A., Nordblom, K. & Wahlberg, R. 2007. Maximum Fee vs. Child Benefit: A Welfare Analysis of Swedish Child-Care Fee Reform. Bonn: Institute for the study of Labor.

20 OECD. 2013. *OECD Family database* [Online]. Geneva: OECD. Available: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm#child_outcomes [Accessed 15 April 2013].

21 Goodman, A., Sibieta, L. & Washbrook, E. 2009. Inequalities in educational outcomes among children aged 3 to 16: Final report for the National Equality Panel. London: National Equality Panel.

22 Dearden, L., Sibieta, L. & Sylva, K. 2010. From birth to age 5: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study. In: Goodman, A. & Gregg, P. (eds.) *Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?* York: Joseph Rowntree Trust. P. 19

Chapter 2: Current Models of Early Years Education

3.1 Introduction

This section reviews current practice in Scotland and three other countries with the goal of comparing the systems (both organisational and funding) put in place to support early years education. Australia was selected as it has a reputation of taking childhood mental health seriously²³ and using schools to offset social disadvantage, and has recently emphasised early years education as an important building block²⁴. Ireland has an approach to early years education that on pedagogic terms is often highly praised²⁵ and uses an approach to delivery and funding that has much in common with the UK. Enabling four-year-olds to enter the education system is a recent innovation.

Finland has been included as a comparator as its overall educational outcomes are impressive²⁶ but it differs from the others in having a relatively late start to formal education and its organisation of the delivery of early years education and childcare. The different approach of each country is briefly reviewed and then the final section compares differences in approach and differences in outcome. Starting from the acknowledged weaknesses in the current Scottish approach²⁷, this discussion forms the basis for the policy proposals set out in section 4.

23 Barrett, P. M., Farrell, L. J. & Ollendick, T. H. 2006. Long-term outcomes of an Australian universal prevention trial of anxiety and depression symptoms in children and youth: An evaluation of the Friends Program. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, **35**, 403-411, Sawyer, M., Arney, F., Baghurst, P., Clark, J., Graetz, B., Kosky, R., Nurcombe, B., Patton, G., Prior, M., Raphael, B., Rey, J., Whaites, L. & Zubrick, S. 2000. The mental health of young people in Australia: Child and adolescent component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Canberra, ACT: Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

24 Cortis, N. & Head, B. 2010. Tensions and challenges in Australia's early years field: Views from the inside. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), Department of Education, E. a. W. 2009. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.

25 Siolta 2012a. Research Digest: Standard 6 Play. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, Siolta 2012b. Research Digest: Standard 7 Curriculum. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

26 Heinämäki, L. 2011. Early Childhood Education in Finland. Potsdam: Liberal Institute, OECD 2006. Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

27 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

■ 3.2 Australia

The philosophy behind the Australian model is encapsulated in the policy: ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming’²⁸. This approach should be seen as part of the wider approach to using schooling as a safe place for children to grow up and a general concern with the mental health of children and young adults²⁹. In totality, this approach seeks to bring the principles behind the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the core of Australian education. It also reflects the steadily growing importance of Early Years Education³⁰ as the Australian Government accepts the arguments of the importance of early years education in setting the life chances of children³¹.

■ 3.2.1 Overview

Early Education covers the period from birth to five at which stage children commence formal primary schooling. The focus is “on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development³²”. Play is central to the Australian early years education approach since it is individual, can take place in a social context, allows the child to construct meaning of the world around them and forms the basis for the later skills required for more formal learning³³. As such, children are active participants in deciding how they will learn at this stage of their development.

28 Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.

29 Brown, M. A. 2010. To consider ways of improving the UK’s Early Years Education Systems through a comparative study of the Finnish Education System (reading and language development) and the approaches to its delivery. Derby: Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences.

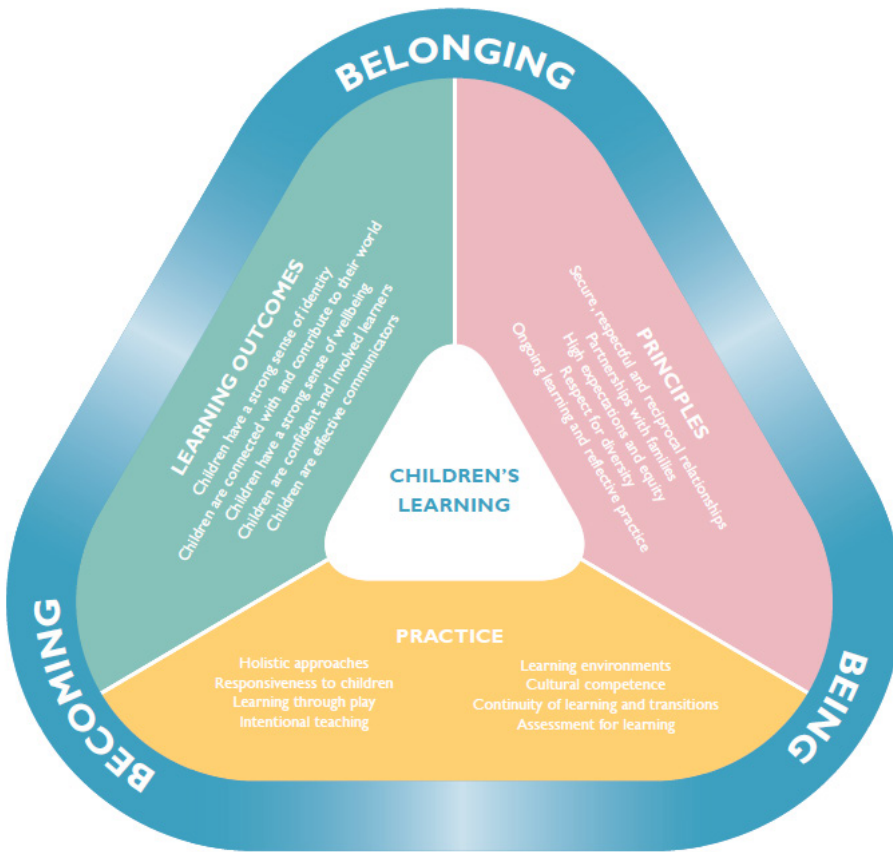
30 Cortis, N. & Head, B. 2010. Tensions and challenges in Australia’s early years field: Views from the inside. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

31 Bowen, S., Zwi, A., Sainsbury, P. & Whitehead, M. 2009. Killer facts, politics and other influences: what evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia? *Evidence & Policy*, **5**, 5-32..

32 Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace. p.5

33 Fleeer, M. & Raban, B. 2005. Literacy and numeracy that counts from birth to five years: A review of the literature. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Figure 3: The Australian Early Years Model³⁴



One feature is the transition from home to early childhood settings and in turn to primary school. The requirement is that families are involved in these key steps and can thus prepare and support their children as they make the transitions.

■ 3.2.2 Funding

Funding for such provision remains a patchwork mostly relying on subsidies (that vary according to perceived need) to allow parents to buy provision from private providers³⁵ although there is an entitlement to 15 hours per week ECEC for 40 weeks in the year before a child starts primary school. The latter is a popular option with some 82% of Australian children taking up the option of pre-school provision³⁶.

34 Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.p. 10

35 Bennett, C. 2011. *A practical vision for early childhood education and care*. Canberra: PwC Australia.

36 Australian Government Office of Early Childhood Education and Care (April 2010), 'State of child care in Australia,

The funding model is complex but mainly based around rebates for costs incurred by parents and subsidy of provision in certain regions. The two main sources are Child Care Benefit, which is means tested and provides payment for the provider of childcare for between 24 and 50 hours per week. If this is used to enable a family member to enter work, education or training an additional (non-means tested) Child Care Rebate is paid to cover up to 50% of out of pocket expenses. Additional grants take account the specific costs of rural provision and of areas of high need. These are paid to providers to maintain a level of service or to encourage new providers to enter a given market.

■ 3.2.3 *Organisation*

Despite the importance of early years education in the policy process there are problems in terms of failure to address the related question of how to provide childcare³⁷. In addition, early years provision is the responsibility of multiple government departments leading to “long-standing conflict around early childhood as a responsibility for education, social service or health bureaucracies; and within childcare, unresolved tensions [exist] around the role of the market and between the overarching policy goals of supporting maternal workforce participation and supporting child development³⁸”.

■ 3.2.4 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

The 2009 strategy set out a clear framework for the pedagogic aspects of early years education but left the implementation fragmented across departments (at the Federal level) and across the three layers of government (Federal, State and Local).

Nonetheless, as in the UK, the reliance on private provision has led to a lack of access in some areas (either remote areas or those with a high level of poverty) and rising costs. Since the subsidies do not cover the full costs of provision, this excludes poorer families at the same time as imposing rising costs on the state budget. The result is that families revert to a patchwork of provision to control their costs³⁹ rather than being able to access high quality provision. Also, there is still a residual problem of a lack of quality in terms of childcare provision that reflects the

37 Cortis, N. & Head, B. 2010. Tensions and challenges in Australia’s early years field: Views from the inside. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

38 Ibid. PP. 6-7

39 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009. Barriers and incentives to labour force participation, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics..

historic indifference to the importance of early years learning within the Australian education system⁴⁰.

Provision in Australia is complex as it straddles the various levels of regional, state and national government. The pre-school element is mostly provided by either government provision or not for profit providers. However, childcare up to this stage is mostly provided by for profit organisations. This mirrors an organisational issue within the Australian government with the preschool element being the responsibility of individual States. However, the regulation and funding of the childcare aspect remains a Federal/Commonwealth responsibility.

■ 3.3 *Finland*

The Finnish education system is widely acknowledged as producing high quality outcomes and meeting social expectations of equality of opportunity at all stages. Young children do not commence formal schooling until they are seven although many attend a year of pre-school education from six. The key to the Finnish approach to early years education is high quality childcare that is available once the (lengthy) period of formal maternity/paternity leave is completed. The various forms of pre-school education are focussed on child development and are child centred rather than driven by formal attainment targets⁴¹. As an approach it is perhaps best summarised as allowing the child space to develop their independence but with a degree of monitoring against expected targets⁴².

■ 3.3.1 *Overview*

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) deals with children aged 1-6 and offers different approaches at various stages. Thus, as noted above, those aged six can opt to commence free pre-primary education⁴³. Before this a complex range of provision is made available

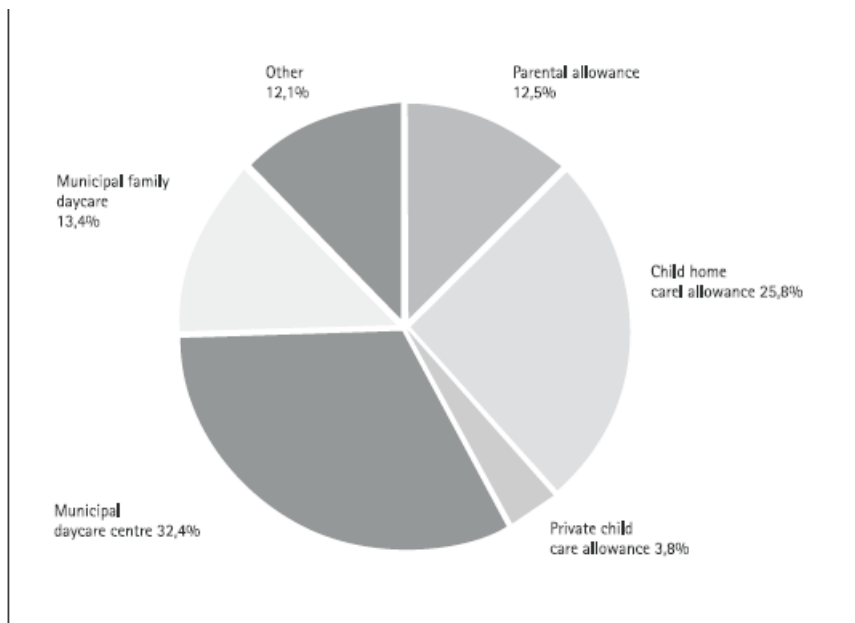
40 Bennett, C. 2011. A practical vision for early childhood education and care. Canberra: PwC Australia.

41 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004. Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. Helsinki: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

42 Brown, M. A. 2010. To consider ways of improving the UK's Early Years Education Systems through a comparative study of the Finnish Education System (reading and language development) and the approaches to its delivery. Derby: Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences.

43 Heinämäki, L. 2011. Early Childhood Education in Finland. Potsdam: Liberal Institute.

Figure 4: The Finnish Early Years System⁴⁴



A key organising block in this system is the municipality, which is required to ensure equity of services to all children regardless of their family background. All staff involved must have completed secondary education and one-third must have a requisite bachelors degree. If the provision is private, then there are clear requirements and training for anyone offering this service.

Running across all these arrangements is a core set of principles⁴⁵:

- Promotion of personal well-being
- Reinforcement of considerate behaviour and action towards others
- Gradual building up autonomy

Education, in the sense of the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills is secondary to child development. In effect, an important principle is that “children learn best when they are active and interested”. Pedagogically the approach is that children are encouraged to learn and develop understanding through interaction with the environment. This interaction is also filtered through curriculum areas that carry on into year 7 of: mathematics, natural sciences, history and society, aesthetics, ethics, religion and philosophy.

44 Ibid. p.6

45 Ibid.

■ 3.3.2 *Funding*

A key part of this is the provision of subsidised day care for all children who wish to attend. While most parents pay something, the cost is heavily subsidised for low-income families. Equally families can choose to stay at home and in this case receive specific allowances, so, in effect, the social cost is equal regardless of the chosen approach and this allows space for parental beliefs about how best to bring up their own children. The three available options can be summarised as:

- Private day care where the state provides an allowance and the provision is organised by parents but has to meet state guidelines;
- Municipal day care which is subsidised (or free) and is either provided directly by local authorities or bought from private providers; or
- Home childcare, for children under three, in which case the parents receive an allowance to enable them to care for the children.

■ 3.3.3 *Organisation*

As discussed in the introduction, one regular problem with UK governments is a tendency to identify and try to adopt aspects of the various Scandinavian systems regardless of the underlying context. In this case, the Finnish approach to early years education is rooted in a wide range of family support systems. This commences from taking the view that social welfare systems reflect the responsibility of the state for its citizens and that access is based on citizenship rather than social insurance or meeting narrow categories⁴⁶.

In consequence the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health⁴⁷ ensures an interconnected range of benefits are available ranging from maternity (and paternity) grants, family leave, child care provision (subsidised), family leave, child welfare clinics, family guidance, child protection and specific help for some families or communities. It is within this framework that the approach to early years education should be understood, not as an isolated policy area that can be picked up and set down into a different context.

46 Ibid.

47 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland*. Helsinki: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

■ 3.3.4 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

The Finnish model is partly about easing return to work but, unlike in the UK, this is not a policy goal that is elevated above other concerns. Instead, as in Sweden⁴⁸, work is seen as the best guarantor of escaping family poverty but this is balanced with a child centred approach that gives parent(s) considerable flexibility in how they engage with the labour market.

In addition special provision is made available for children with special needs, to reflect the bilingual nature of some regions of Finland and the specific cultural and social identity of children from the Sami community. The provision is also available to all, including children of families seeking to have their immigration status finalised.

■ 3.4 *Ireland*

As noted above, Ireland has the earliest start date for children commencing Primary Education in the EU⁴⁹ (although this does vary between four and five across the differing Irish education authorities). In addition, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age (extended to two years if the child has a disability)⁵⁰.

■ 3.4.1 *Overview*

The provision is for a number of hours and a fixed number of weeks. This basically assumes that the free pre-school year is 3 hours per day over 38 weeks. If a child attends for longer than this allowance (either hours or weeks) then the parent is directly charged for the extra time⁵¹. The pedagogic approach to early years

48 Brink, A., Nordblom, K. & Wahlberg, R. 2007. Maximum Fee vs. Child Benefit: A Welfare Analysis of Swedish Child-Care Fee Reform. Bonn: Institute for the study of Labor.

49 Riggall, A. & Sharp, C. 2008. The Structure of Primary Education: England and Other countries. Cambridge: NFER.

50 NCCA 2009. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education Audit: Similarities and differences. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

51 Citizens Information. 2013. *Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme* [Online]. Dublin: Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. Available: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/early_childhood_care_and_education_scheme.html [Accessed 22 March 2013].

education relies on the belief that “play is the natural medium for learning⁵²”. This is stressed as: “in order for it to be enjoyable and beneficial, young children need to spend a significant amount of time within the setting engaged in play/exploration, and these and other playful activities should be central to the daily routine⁵³.” At this stage in their education “for the young child, the distinctions between subjects such as maths or art are not relevant⁵⁴”. Instead the curriculum is based around the concepts of: Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communication; and. Exploring and thinking. In effect, this is close to the Australian approach⁵⁵ discussed above.

■ 3.4.2 *Funding*

If the period of attendance falls within the set limits (ie no more than 3 hours per day and no more than 38 weeks per year) then the state fee is paid to the playschool or day care centre⁵⁶. However, if a child is assessed as meeting the requirements of the early start scheme (discussed below) then the attendance period is shorter (two and a half hours per week) but support and educational involvement is more intense.

■ 3.4.3 *Organisation*

An important innovation within the Irish pre-school structure is the Early Start scheme⁵⁷. This is run as an alternative to the conventional pre-school scheme but the sessions are shorter and run using vacant classrooms in existing primary schools. This is offered to children who are at risk of not reaching their potential within the school system and to tackle educational disadvantage. The sessions are run by Primary School teachers (supported by teaching assistants) at a ratio of 15:1 but only cover blocks of two and a half hours a day run at preset times.

52 Siolta 2012b. Research Digest: Standard 7 Curriculum. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

53 Siolta 2012a. Research Digest: Standard 6 Play. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. P. 2

54 Siolta 2012b. Research Digest: Standard 7 Curriculum. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. p. 4

55 Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.

56 NCCA 2009. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education Audit: Similarities and differences*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

57 Citizens Information. 2012. *Early Start Programme* [Online]. Dublin: Citizens Information. Available: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/early_start.html [Accessed 15 April 2013].

Parents are expected to be involved in the practical running of the classes. In this case funding is provided directly to the primary school that hosts the Early Start classes to reflect the use of their resources (staff, space and equipment).

■ 3.4.4 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

As a pedagogic model, the Irish approach is often praised. However, in practice it remains under-funded in comparisons to other parts of the education system⁵⁸. The 'Early Start' strand is seen as effective, but as with all such targeted benefits carries the risk of parents failing to take up the provision due to the stigma potentially involved⁵⁹.

More generally, the system mostly relies on the private sector and, as in other similar systems⁶⁰, this leads to critical gaps in provision. In particular private providers tend not to offer sufficient places in poor or remote communities or for children with particular needs. The Early Start scheme is a partial solution but as with all such targeted programmes can leave some on the margins between failing to qualify for extra support particularly poorly served⁶¹.

■ 3.5 *Scotland*

Within Scotland the importance of early years education has been accepted by both the Parliament⁶² and the Scottish Government⁶³. However, as the Scotland

58 Crooks, T. & de Buis, C. 2012. *The Economics of Children's Early Years Early Care and Education in Ireland: Costs and Benefits*. Dublin: Start Strong.

59 Barrett, P. & Turner, C. 2001. Prevention of anxiety symptoms in primary school children: Preliminary results from a universal school-based trial. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, **40**, 399-410, Rapee, R. M., Wignall, A., Sheffield, J., Kowalenko, N., Davis, A., McLoone, J. & Spence, S. H. 2006. Adolescents' Reactions to Universal and Indicated Prevention Programs for Depression: Perceived Stigma and Consumer Satisfaction. *Prevention Science*, **7**, 167-177, Shochet, I. & Ham, D. 2004. Universal School-based Approaches to Preventing Adolescent Depression: Past Findings and Future Directions of the Resourceful Adolescent Program. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, **6**, 17-25.

60 Cortis, N. & Head, B. 2010. Tensions and challenges in Australia's early years field: Views from the inside. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

61 Danson, M., McAlpine, R., Spicker, P. & Sullivan, W. 2012. *The Case for Universalism: An assessment of the evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of the universal welfare state*. Glasgow: Jimmy Reid Foundation.

62 Scottish Parliament 2011. *Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years*. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.

63 Scottish Government 2008. *The Early Years Framework*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Institute has covered in another report⁶⁴, there is little evidence that this has addressed the deep-seated problem that children from poorer backgrounds have already fallen behind by the time they start primary school⁶⁵ (and with this progressively worsening across secondary and tertiary education⁶⁶). Equally, although in some key respects, the Scottish model differs from that in England, there is the same reliance on expensive private sector provision for the bulk of childcare arrangements⁶⁷. This leads to expensive and fragmented provision and the Daycare Trust's annual survey of childcare costs indicates that Scottish parents with children in nurseries face an average bill of between £94.35 (if the child is over 2) and £101.19 (if the child is aged 2 or less) per week. Alternatively, a childminder costed around £93.50 per week⁶⁸ in 2013. Worse, due to the fragmented nature of the provision, services are lacking in some districts and specialist provision for disabled children is hard to find.

The Scottish Government⁶⁹ offers some sobering information in terms of the long-term cost of failing children at an early age:

- The short term savings from investing in early years services and support from prebirth to aged five could be up to £37,400 a year per child in the most severe cases - children who have complex health and social care needs, and approximately £5,100 a year for a child with moderate health and social care needs.
- The potential medium term savings, if interventions from pre-birth to eight are 100 per cent effective, could be up to £131 million a year across Scotland, while in the long term, failure to effectively intervene to address the complex needs of a child in early life could result in a nine fold increase in costs to the public purse.

64 Cook, R. 2012a. The Personal, Social and Economic costs of Social Exclusion in Scotland. Glasgow: Scotland Institute.

65 Deacon, S. 2011. *Joining the Dots: A better start for Scotland's children*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

66 Scottish Government 2010c. *Tackling Child Poverty in Scotland: A Discussion Paper*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Government 2010a. *Child Poverty in Scotland: a brief overview of the evidence*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

67 ONS 2011. *Childcare and early years survey of parents 2011*. London: Office for National Statistics.

68 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

69 Scottish Government 2010b. *The Financial Impact of Early Years Interventions in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

- A package of effective early years support to reduce the frequency and type of services demanded by children with the most severe needs could have a significant impact on improving outcomes for them and reducing long term costs to the public purse. If earlier, effective support could be given to a child with the most severe needs, resulting in a 10 per cent reduction in the total amount paid out to cover services later in life, this could result in a potential saving of around £94,000 for each individual

The case for effective Early Years support is clear but the key is how to provide this effectively. Equally it should be stressed that addressing these problems is not simply one of the formal provision of early years education, it involves our wider attitudes to childcare, the extent that as a society we tolerate children living in poverty and a wide range of personal and social factors⁷⁰.

■ 3.5.1 Overview

Recent legislation has meant that in theory parents in Scotland are entitled to 475 hours of free pre-school education⁷¹. The 2006 Act and the 2008 guidance⁷² in combination require local councils to create provision where the private sector has failed (usually in poor communities, remote areas or for children with specific needs). However, such intervention is only required when the Council is aware of the shortfall in provision and this loophole means that many chose not to carry out their duties⁷³. The recent Day Care Trust report indicates: “our survey showed that nearly half – 12 out of the 26 local authorities in Scotland – did not know if they had sufficient childcare for different groups of children⁷⁴”. Against this background, the formal commitment to providing sufficient places for all pre-school children⁷⁵ is failing and the available provision is left to the vagaries of the free market.

70 Deacon, S. 2011. *Joining the Dots: A better start for Scotland’s children*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

71 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

72 Scottish Government 2008. *The Early Years Framework*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

73 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

74 Ibid.

75 Scottish Government 2008. *The Early Years Framework*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament 2011. *Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years*. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.

Specifically Scottish Local Authorities are⁷⁶:

- “required to secure school education (nursery school or classes) for prescribed pre-school children from the school term following their third birthday, should their parents wish a place;
- required to provide 475 hours over the school year commencing 1 August for 12 months, or a proportion of that according to the child’s birth date;
- required to have regard to guidance issued by Scottish Ministers when exercising their functions in relation to pre-school education;
- required to endeavour to secure improvement in all pre-school education centres, including partner providers;
- empowered to secure pre-school education beyond their statutory duties, for example, additional education for 3- and 4-year olds or earlier than the first term after the child’s third birthday; and
- entitled to charge for services, which are provided outwith their statutory duty”.

■ 3.5.2 Funding

Funding for provision in Scotland is a complex mix of payments to parents in various forms including Tax Credits and grants to local authorities to allow them to meet the requirements of the 2008 framework. The latter includes:

- One-off initiatives such as the £6.8m Early Years and Early Action Fund⁷⁷ designed to improve the quality of Early Years provision and to provide support for families facing severe problems. This programme also sought to provide free childcare for vulnerable children⁷⁸. In 2013, this will be replaced by a £20m early intervention fund⁷⁹ that is more focussed on family needs;

76 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

77 Scottish Government. 2011a. *Early Years and Early Action Fund* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/03/08105456> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

78 Scottish Government. 2011b. *Free childcare for vulnerable children* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government,. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/12/21140320> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

79 Scottish Government. 2013a. *New £20 million funding stream for third sector* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/06/earlyyears29062012> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

- Overall this type of funding is part of a wider £270 million Early Years Change Fund, which includes a Scottish Government contribution of £50 million over the next 4 years⁸⁰;
- The draft budget for 2013-14 indicates a total expenditure by the Scottish Government on 'Early Years and Social Services Workforce' of £40.3m⁸¹;
- The Scottish Government provides £1.2m annually to local authorities in respect of childcare for 2 year olds⁸² where there are particular needs;
- Funding within the local authority block grant to enable councils to purchase provision to meet the statutory expectation. This varies by council (for example, £1.5m in East Dumbartonshire, £0.5m in East Renfrewshire⁸³) and critically is not ring-fenced.

The problem in Scotland is not that the importance of early years education is understated but that responsibility is fragmented with education, child care and child health spread between different government departments⁸⁴. To this must be added that the funding to local councils to ensure sufficient places are available is opaque and that planning at the council level to ensure that provision can meet the needs is, at best, haphazard.

Funding for parents in Scotland is largely set by the framework created by the UK Government as it involves aspects of social welfare and taxation⁸⁵. In essence, funding can come from individual Child Benefit or different forms of Tax Credits⁸⁶.

80 Scottish Government. 2011b. *Free childcare for vulnerable children* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government,. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/12/21140320> [Accessed 17 April 2013], *ibid*.

81 Scottish Government. 2013b. *Scottish Draft Budget 2013-14: Chapter 5 Education and Lifelong Learning* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/7829/7> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

82 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

83 Williams, M. 2011. Anger as second council cuts pre-school funding. *The Herald*, 8 November.

84 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

85 Resolution Foundation. 2012. *Black Friday as Chancellor wields axe to Tax Credits* [Online]. Resolution Foundation. Available: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/> [Accessed 6 April 2012].

86 Scottish Family Information Service. 2013a. *Funding for Childcare* [Online]. Scottish Family Information Service. Available: <https://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/NationalCategoryDetail.aspx?ncid=2> [Accessed 18 April 2013].

The childcare element to the Working Tax Credit can be used to offset the cost of any approved provision. There have been consistent criticisms of these arrangements as overly complex⁸⁷, vulnerable to small changes in personal circumstances and not enough to defray the resulting costs⁸⁸. Whether the primary goal is to ensure access to high quality early years education or to enable parents to re-enter the labour market, funding is inadequate compared to the high costs of provision⁸⁹.

■ 3.5.3 Organisation

As discussed above, some, but not all, pre-school providers offer 'funded places' using funding provided by their local authority to provide free part-time provision. In effect, Local Authorities estimate demand and commission this provision from the range of local providers⁹⁰. The actual provision can consist of:

- A local authority nursery school
- A nursery class in a primary school
- A local authority or private day nursery
- An independent school nursery
- A playgroup
- A registered childminder

It should be stressed that local authorities do not provide funded pre-school places but instead are responsible for commissioning provision from the private sector⁹¹. Such places are then funded by the local authority, not paid for by the parents but parents remain liable for charges for additional hours or anything that is outside the agreed provision.

There are two fundamental flaws in this system. One is, as discussed, many local authorities are not aware of the level of demand so there is no reason to

87 Vaux, G. 2007. *Welfare rights: Poverty progress in reverse as tax-credit ladder proves shaky* [Online]. Community Care.co.uk. Available: <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2007/06/14/104797/Welfare-rights-Poverty-progress-in-reverse-as-tax-credit-ladder-proves.htm> [Accessed 2 August 2010].

88 Daycare Trust. 2010. *Lone parent welfare reform will fail without investment in childcare* [Online]. Available: [http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-\\$21385231\\$475087.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-$21385231$475087.htm) [Accessed 15 November 2010].

89 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

90 MacBride, G. 2010. *Nursery Education: Research Review*. EIS.

91 Scottish Family Information Service. 2013b. *Pre-School Education: Choosing Pre-School Education for Your 3 or 4 year old* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Family Information Service. Available: <http://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/NationalCategoryDetail.aspx?ncid=7> [Accessed 18 April 2013].

believe that sufficient places are made available⁹². Equally the element of the local authority grant designed to cover this provision is not ring-fenced and there have been regular press stories about provision being withdrawn as local councils seek to balance their budgets⁹³. This has led to repeated complaints that councils are rationing provision on financial grounds rather than meeting local needs⁹⁴ as they are required to do.

■ 3.5.4 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

One clear strength of the Scottish approach is the widespread acknowledgement of the importance of early years education in terms of child welfare, as a means to offset the impact of poverty and as a basis for parental return to work. In particular, the importance of the period between birth and three years as shaping a child's life chances is acknowledged by the Scottish Government⁹⁵.

Having acknowledged this, the problem is that in practice the provision does not meet the goals. Across the UK, pre-school childcare is marked by a paradox of high cost (to parents) and low wages (for carers employed in the sector). In effect, private provision in the UK means that children from poorer families either cannot access any formal pre-school education or find that the quality of provision is low⁹⁶.

In consequence⁹⁷ the system is neither universal nor coherent and poorer families need to supplement funded childcare provision by a complex set of arrangements. These 'top-ups' fill gaps when the parent(s) are at work but rarely encompass anything beyond simple child minding⁹⁸. The *Growing Up in Scotland*⁹⁹ longitudinal research has found that 60 percent of families with three or four year old children use two or more forms of childcare⁹⁹. This extra care is substantial, ranging from

92 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

93 Williams, M. 2011. Anger as second council cuts pre-school funding. *The Herald*, 8 November.

94 Williams, M. 2012. Choice of nurseries curbed Teaching unions 'must fight cuts'. *The Herald*, 27 December.

95 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

96 MacBride, G. 2010. Nursery Education: Research Review. EIS.

97 Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

98 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

99 Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks

over 30 hours per week in one third of cases, 17-30 hours for another third and the rest used 9-16 hours per week. On this basis it is clear that current provision of 475 hours per annum is inadequate¹⁰⁰.

This fragmentation of childcare also mirrors a fragmentation in the legislative framework between childcare and early learning. The goals in the Scottish Government's *Curriculum for Excellence*¹⁰¹ are laudable but the provision currently available means that all too often provision is designed to enable parents to enter work rather than provide effective early years education¹⁰². This is a serious flaw and has been identified by the OECD¹⁰³ as undermining attempts to ensure that early years provision is high quality. Again those who are failed the most are those least able to afford the type of provision that overcomes the gaps left by inadequate state support.

■ 3.6 Summary

■ 3.6.1 Different Models, Similar Goals?

One clear message in all four countries is an acknowledgement, belated in some cases¹⁰⁴, of the importance of early years education. It is now clear that the problems of poverty in the period between birth and three years permanently affect a child's life chances thereafter¹⁰⁵. However, this acknowledgement has not been met by the development of an effective policy framework. Figure 2, and other research¹⁰⁶, indicates that significant differences in cognitive ability have been created by age three and that in the UK this widens in the period covered by most formal Early Years Provision.

in the early years. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

100 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

101 Scottish Government 2008. *The Early Years Framework*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

102 MacBride, G. 2010. *Nursery Education: Research Review*. EIS.

103 OECD 2006. *Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

104 Bowen, S., Zwi, A., Sainsbury, P. & Whitehead, M. 2009. Killer facts, politics and other influences: what evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia? *Evidence & Policy*, **5**, 5-32.

105 Goodman, A., Sibieta, L. & Washbrook, E. 2009. *Inequalities in educational outcomes among children aged 3 to 16: Final report for the National Equality Panel*. London: National Equality Panel.

106 Bradshaw, P. 2011. *Growing Up in Scotland: Changes in child cognitive ability in the pre-school years*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

■ 3.6.2 For the Child or to allow Adults to enter work?

Again there is a policy consensus in this respect between the four different countries. All stress both the importance of child development and that effective early years provision can allow adults to return to work. However, the balance is different. The UK-wide approach is one where the needs of children can sometimes be missing¹⁰⁷ in a narrative that stresses the importance of bringing parents (especially lone parents¹⁰⁸) back into the labour market. Ireland and Australia share much of this approach but aspects of their systems enable more parental choice than the DWP allows. The exception is the Finnish system. Here, there is still a goal of enabling parents to return to work and the result of their policy framework is a high rate of entry into the labour market, but the focus is on provision for the child.

■ 3.6.3 Funding Systems and the Provision of Early Years Education

Scotland, Ireland and Australia all share some key similarities. These include a reliance on private providers for provision, with the capacity, adopted by both Scotland and Australia, to use grants to encourage provision in certain areas. The main source of costs to the state is the direct funding of this provision but equally all three countries invest in developing pedagogic guidance and quality assurance. The weakness in each system is that provision is patchy, quality is variable and the cost is a barrier for many. In addition, the limited hours available under the funded systems leads parents to create a complex patchwork of provision in an attempt to cover their working commitments.

The Finnish system shares some of this but varies in some critical ways. The funding system is either direct to the parents (whether they wish to keep the children at home or use private provision) or in the form of subsidised municipal provision (though this is sometimes delivered via the private sector). This leads to two fundamental differences. First, local authorities are directly responsible for provision (unlike the commissioning approach used in the other three countries)

107 Department of Work and Pensions. 2012. *Get Britain Working* [Online]. London: Department of Work and Pensions. Available: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/get-britain-working/> [Accessed 21 August 2012].

108 Anning, A. 2000. *New Deals and Old Dilemmas: Lone Parents of Young Children Balancing Work and Parenthood*. *British Educational Research Association*. Cardiff University, Davies, L. 2011. Lone parents: unemployed or otherwise engaged? In: Social Policy Association Conference (ed.) *The Next Generation on the New Politics*, Daycare Trust. 2010. *Lone parent welfare reform will fail without investment in childcare* [Online]. Available: [http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-\\$21385231\\$475087.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-$21385231$475087.htm) [Accessed 15 November 2010].

and second there is a substantial degree of parental choice as to what type of provision to use.

Beyond the practicalities of delivering early years provision, Finland differs in two other important ways. First, everything related to young children (education, child care, health, parental support) is the remit of a single Government Department. The other countries have this provision spread across multiple departments and sometimes multiple layers of governance. Secondly, early years provision is set within a wider framework of using a wide range of grants and the tax system to try and eliminate systemic poverty for young people. In contrast, the policy framework in Australia, Ireland and Scotland can be seen as seeking to use early years provision to minimise the consequences of poverty.

Chapter 3: Policy Proposals

4.1 Introduction

The analysis at the end of chapter three points to a number of areas that would improve early years provision within Scotland but that still accept the constraints of the current devolution settlement. With policy around key areas such as benefits and taxation in the hands of the Coalition Government it is unrealistic to believe that the Scottish Government can do much to halt the growth of child poverty¹⁰⁹. The policies of the DWP will inevitably see the number of children in poverty steadily increase.

As such, the focus, as often within Scotland, has to be on how to mitigate these effects so that the existing problems of social exclusion do not worsen¹¹⁰. With this in mind, the policy proposals concentrate on aspects over which the Scottish Government has control and in particular about how to integrate a fragmented system.

4.2 Volume of Provision

It is clear from the *Growing Up in Scotland*¹¹¹ analysis that the current 475 hours of free provision is inadequate¹¹². The proposal to extend this to 600 is welcome but when 60% of parents indicate they require closer to 1,000 hours then even this will fail to meet need. In part this is a consequence of the confusion as to whether early years provision being for children or to release adults into the labour market. Few jobs fit within the limited hours provided by current allowance and families have to either afford expensive additional provision or rely on a patchwork of unreliable arrangements.

Using the Finnish approach we would argue that a tiered approach be adopted. The current arrangements fit the pedagogic argument that part time early years

109 Resolution Foundation. 2012. *Black Friday as Chancellor wields axe to Tax Credits* [Online]. Resolution Foundation. Available: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/> [Accessed 6 April 2012].

110 Cook, R. 2012b. *Social Exclusion in Scotland*. Glasgow: Scotland Institute, Parekh, A., Kenway, P. & MacInnes, T. 2010. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Scotland 2010* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

111 Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. *Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years*. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

112 Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

education is every bit as effective as full time¹¹³ but that part-time does not match the practical requirements of parents. With this in mind, our proposal is that the current pattern of 600 hours of guaranteed provision for all is retained and an additional 600 is made available on a means tested basis.

This will not address all the problems, but will create a framework in which lower income families can make more secure arrangements for their children. It will also go some way to addressing the problem that children of better off parents will have such a structured provision while those from poorer backgrounds face a more fragmented support system.

■ 4.3 *Administrative Arrangements*

One key lesson from Finland is that bringing administrative arrangements for early years childcare (and primary education) under one department works. At the moment this is split up with different areas responsible for health, education, childcare and family support. All these factors are related and it is important that, not just at the policy level, but at the practical level of implementation, they are seen as a whole.

■ 4.4 *Funding*

Funding at the moment is split between different funds and different areas. Addressing the administrative issue will help to some extent, but any proposal to extend the number of hours provided by local councils has to be fully funded. There are repeated stories of how some councils are meeting both the spirit and the letter of the current arrangements but others are either remaining unaware of demand¹¹⁴ or using administrative arrangements such as deadlines (or simply by capping provision¹¹⁵) in order to reduce costs.

In this respect it would help if this element of local authority funding was ring-fenced¹¹⁶ as that would help resolve some of the current arguments about the adequacy, or otherwise, of the central grant. Equally, and this is returned to below, there is some evidence that the need to inspect the quality of provision is not

113 Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B. & Elliot, K. 2003. *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from the Pre-School period*. Nottingham: DfES.

114 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

115 Williams, M. 2012. Choice of nurseries curbed Teaching unions 'must fight cuts'. *The Herald*, 27 December.

116 MacBride, G. 2010. *Nursery Education: Research Review*. EIS.

being carried out and that councils are more focussed on low cost provision than they are on high quality provision¹¹⁷. The problem with this is that the evidence is clear, low quality provision has no long-term educational benefits for the children and becomes, in effect, a form of child minding¹¹⁸.

■ 4.5 *Local Authorities to become providers*

Acknowledging the funding problem, the requirement is to look for the most cost-effective method of delivering high quality provision. It is clear across the UK the private sector fails in this role, it is expensive even when the quality is low¹¹⁹ and the price of high quality provision is beyond the range of most families. Thus the role of local authority as purchaser of services, as adopted in Australia, Ireland and Scotland should be amended to make the local authority a provider of services as in Finland¹²⁰. Again as with the Finnish example, there is no reason why this cannot include buying in provision from the private sector but it profoundly alters the relationship between Scottish local authorities and early years provision.

This does, however, lead to the question of capacity. In this respect we suggest that adapting the Irish 'Early Start' approach and consider making use of the current Primary School estate and facilities¹²¹. While there is a clear need to ensure that provision for four year olds remains differentiated from formal primary schooling, this approach has the advantage of:

1. Allowing integration in terms of a child's progression from pre-school into formal primary schooling;
2. Such provision will make effective use of existing capacity in the primary sector;

117 Ibid.

118 Brown, M. A. 2010. To consider ways of improving the UK's Early Years Education Systems through a comparative study of the Finnish Education System (reading and language development) and the approaches to its delivery. Derby: Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences, Fler, M. & Raban, B. 2005. Literacy and numeracy that counts from birth to five years: A review of the literature. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training, Goodman, A., Sibieta, L. & Washbrook, E. 2009. Inequalities in educational outcomes among children aged 3 to 16: Final report for the National Equality Panel. London: National Equality Panel, NEF 2009. Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all. London: New Economics Foundation, OECD 2006. Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Scottish Parliament 2011. Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.

119 Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].

120 Heinämäki, L. 2011. Early Childhood Education in Finland. Potsdam: Liberal Institute.

121 MacBride, G. 2010. Nursery Education: Research Review. EIS.

3. It will minimise the scope and risk that local authorities seek to meet their statutory requirements with low quality provision;
4. Such an approach can also be used to address the endemic problem of low wages for most staff in the private sector;
5. Involvement of trained teachers has been found to have a positive correlation to the development of children’s cognitive capacities¹²² and this fits the OECD argument that the qualifications required for primary school and pre-school education are similar¹²³;
6. At the moment some pre-school provision in Scotland is offered by the public sector (as employers) and there is evidence this offers more access to key features such as outside play areas¹²⁴ as well as being more likely to use qualified teaching staff;

There is currently capacity within Scotland’s primary schools to allow a substantial expansion of usage. In the latest usage survey¹²⁵, 21% (433) of Scotland’s primary schools had enrolments at less than 50% of capacity. This varies radically across Scotland, being highest in Eilean Sar (51%), the Shetlands (50%) and Highland (47%) where the dispersed population makes creating effective school cohorts impractical. However, there is also substantial spare capacity in urban areas, with 17% of primary schools in Glasgow having half or less of their notional student numbers. Across the whole of Scotland the spare capacity is:

Table 2: Unused Capacity in Scotland’s Primary Schools

Schools with roll less than 50% of capacity	433	20.9%
Schools with roll 50-<75% of capacity	827	39.9%
Schools with roll 75-<90% of capacity	514	24.8%
Schools with roll 90-<100% of capacity	209	10.1%
Schools with roll greater than capacity (100% or more capacity)	89	4.3%
All	2072	

122 Ibid.

123 OECD 2006. *Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

124 Scottish Government. 2009. *Pre-School and Childcare Statistics 2009* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/09/23100810> [Accessed 18 April 2013].

125 Scottish Government. 2011c. *Primary school capacity by local authority* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Pubs-Pre-SchoolEducation> [Accessed 23 July 2013].

This does indicate that there is potential estates capacity to allow local authorities to use existing Primary Schools to meet their statutory requirements without recourse to the private sector. Using the information in Table 3, it can be estimated that there is 30% under-utilisation in terms of capacity. In 2012, there were 370,680 primary school pupils in Scotland¹²⁶, in a system with the capacity to cope with nearly 480,000. Since there were 97,985¹²⁷ preschool pupils in 2012, this indicates the potential to absorb most, if not all, into the existing estate.

In practice such a complete shift is impractical due to the varying reasons why some schools have low enrolment numbers. In the more remote areas, there is a need for provision that will be under-utilised. In other areas, schools that require significant renovation will be unable to make effective use of the notional spare space. However, even with these caveats, it is clear there is the capacity to use Scotland's existing Primary Schools to create pre-school provision.

A lack of effective estates capacity would have been a major argument against the shift of local authorities from being commissioners of pre-school education to taking on the role of provider. In Scotland, this barrier does not exist, and it is feasible for Scottish local authorities to adopt the Finnish model where they have a choice whether to provide pre-school education or to use the private sector. The advantage of such a shift is that it creates an assumption that provision will be made available, and the potential that such provision will reduce the need for parents to make complex arrangements for their children. The main cost will be that of actual running costs.

As discussed, there is a major problem that the cost of childcare and pre-school provision by the private sector is increasing rapidly¹²⁸. Added, to this, there is strong evidence that Scottish councils are evading their responsibilities mostly by, quite simply, being unaware of the level of demand. As ever, in such a situation, it is the poorest who suffer the most, lacking the resources to supplement formal provision, the means to lobby local authorities and dependent on low quality providers.

126 Scottish Government 2012b. Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

127 Ibid.

128 Children in Scotland 2011. The cost of childcare in Scotland: A special report.

To address this, we are making two key proposals:

1. First, that the current divide between child welfare and pre-school education is removed. This has been consistently identified¹²⁹ as one reason for the gap between intentions and actual delivery in terms of early years education in Scotland;
2. Second, shift the role of local authorities from that of commissioners of services to providers. There is strong evidence that the capacity exists within our existing primary schools for a version of the Irish model to be adopted. Given the high cost of private sector provision in the UK, there is no reason to believe that similar provision by the public sector will be as expensive or fragmented.

129 Ibid, Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Family Information Service. 2013a. *Funding for Childcare* [Online]. Scottish Family Information Service. Available: <https://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/NationalCategoryDetail.aspx?ncid=2> [Accessed 18 April 2013], Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013], Scottish Government 2010b. The Financial Impact of Early Years Interventions in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, ONS 2011. Childcare and early years survey of parents 2011. London: Office for National Statistics.

Summary and Conclusions

Policy in terms of early years education is a strange mixture of consensus¹³⁰ as to the importance of high quality provision and confusion in terms of delivery. As this report has made clear, this is not just a problem in Scotland (or the wider UK).

In effect, in many systems there is an over-reliance on private sector provision. This leads to problems of gaps (especially for poorer districts) even when the state tries to subsidise firms to operate in particular areas. Equally, the private sector approach is marked by high costs for users, low wages for most of the staff and variable quality. Finally, and particularly in the UK, there is confusion as to whether the real goal of childcare is to ensure parents return to work more quickly¹³¹. In some DWP statements¹³², the lack of focus on the needs of the child is marked.

A second problem is in understanding the cost of current provision. Even in Scotland (see section 3.5.2 above) it is impossible to gain an estimate of the direct cost to the state. Local Authorities receive various grant streams to develop provision, improve quality and to provide free places for some children. Parents receive funding in different ways including tax credits. Overall, the cost to the user, usually individual parents, remains substantial.

For Scotland, what is needed is an approach to early years education that reduces costs and ensures access for all to quality provision. With this in mind, the central policy identified in this report is to shift the responsibility of local authorities from commissioning provision to actually providing early years education for four year olds. It is clear that the current approach leaves too many gaps, is too expensive for users and generally fails to meet the agreed expectations for early years education.

130 NEF 2009. *Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all*. London: New Economics Foundation, OECD 2006. *Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

131 Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. *Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years*. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Daycare Trust. 2010. *Lone parent welfare reform will fail without investment in childcare* [Online]. Available: [http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-\\$21385231\\$475087.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-$21385231$475087.htm) [Accessed 15 November 2010], Anning, A. 2000. *New Deals and Old Dilemmas: Lone Parents of Young Children Balancing Work and Parenthood*. *British Educational Research Association*. Cardiff University.

132 Department of Work and Pensions. 2012. *Get Britain Working* [Online]. London: Department of Work and Pensions. Available: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/get-britain-working/> [Accessed 21 August 2012].

A second issue is the need to bring policy for young children together. At the moment, even ignoring the division between local authorities and the Scottish Government, this is fragmented. Health, welfare, child protection and education issues are all treated as separate issues within different departments. The reality is they are inter-connected and the current boundaries reduce the scope to develop an integrated approach.

No one disputes the costs of failing to develop an effective approach to pre-school childcare and learning¹³³ and the evidence base is ample. Our proposal is a relatively simple one that draws on experience in other countries. At the core, the physical space exists. Our current primary schools have spare capacity and this can be used to bring in a year 4 cohort and thus ensure equity of provision. Ideally, over time, it should be possible to adapt other aspects of the Finnish approach and ensure a wider range of parental choice. However, that would require a radical re-organisation of the various funding streams (not all of which are within the control of the Scottish Parliament).

By creating universal provision at Year 4, we can use existing resources and remove one source of inequity in terms of child development. The evidence is that the actual provision must be different to the conventional primary school curriculum and remain child and play centred. However, as with the Irish experiment, there is no particular difficulty to bringing in pre-school aged children into primary school and some evidence that this will help them with the subsequent transition to formal education.

133 Scottish Government 2010c. Tackling Child Poverty in Scotland: A Discussion Paper. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Government 2010a. Child Poverty in Scotland: a brief overview of the evidence. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Government 2010b. The Financial Impact of Early Years Interventions in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013], Scottish Parliament 2011. Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.

References

- Adamson, P. 2013. Innocenti Report Card 11: Child Well-being in rich companies. Florence: UNICEF.
- Anning, A. 2000. New Deals and Old Dilemmas: Lone Parents of Young Children Balancing Work and Parenthood. *British Educational Research Associatio*. Cardiff University.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009. Barriers and incentives to labour force participation, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Barrett, P. & Turner, C. 2001. Prevention of anxiety symptoms in primary school children: Preliminary results from a universal school-based trial. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, **40**, 399-410.
- Barrett, P. M., Farrell, L. J. & Ollendick, T. H. 2006. Long-term outcomes of an Australian universal prevention trial of anxiety and depression symptoms in children and youth: An evaluation of the Friends Program. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, **35**, 403-411.
- Bennett, C. 2011. A practical vision for early childhood education and care. Canberra: PwC Australia.
- Bowen, S., Zwi, A., Sainsbury, P. & Whitehead, M. 2009. Killer facts, politics and other influences: what evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia? *Evidence & Policy*, **5**, 5-32.
- Bradshaw, P. 2011. Growing Up in Scotland: Changes in child cognitive ability in the pre-school years. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Brink, A., Nordblom, K. & Wahlberg, R. 2007. Maximum Fee vs. Child Benefit: A Welfare Analysis of Swedish Child-Care Fee Reform. Bonn: Institute for the study of Labor.
- Brown, M. A. 2010. To consider ways of improving the UK's Early Years Education Systems through a comparative study of the Finnish Education System (reading and language development) and the approaches to its delivery. Derby: Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences.
- Children in Scotland 2011. The cost of childcare in Scotland: A special report.
- Citizens Information. 2012. *Early Start Programme* [Online]. Dublin: Citizens Information. Available: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/early_start.html [Accessed 15 April 2013].

- Citizens Information. 2013. *Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme* [Online]. Dublin: Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. Available: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/early_childhood_care_and_education_scheme.html [Accessed 22 March 2013].
- Cook, R. 2012a. *The Personal, Social and Economic costs of Social Exclusion in Scotland*. Glasgow: Scotland Institute.
- Cook, R. 2012b. *Social Exclusion in Scotland*. Glasgow: Scotland Institute.
- Cortis, N. & Head, B. 2010. *Tensions and challenges in Australia's early years field: Views from the inside*. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).
- Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.
- Crooks, T. & de Buis, C. 2012. *The Economics of Children's Early Years Early Care and Education in Ireland: Costs and Benefits*. Dublin: Start Strong.
- Danson, M., McAlpine, R., Spicker, P. & Sullivan, W. 2012. *The Case for Universalism: An assessment of the evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of the universal welfare state*. Glasgow: Jimmy Reid Foundation.
- Davies, L. 2011. Lone parents: unemployed or otherwise engaged? *In: Social Policy Association Conference (ed.) The Next Generation on the New Politics*.
- Daycare Trust. 2010. *Lone parent welfare reform will fail without investment in childcare* [Online]. Available: [http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-\\$21385231\\$475087.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/children-and-family/daycare-trust-lone-parent-welfare-reform-will-fail-without-investment-in-childcare-$21385231$475087.htm) [Accessed 15 November 2010].
- Daycare Trust. 2013. *Childcare costs surveys* [Online]. Available: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Deacon, S. 2011. *Joining the Dots: A better start for Scotland's children*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Dearden, L., Sibieta, L. & Sylva, K. 2010. From birth to age 5: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study. *In: Goodman, A. & Gregg, P. (eds.) Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?* York: Joseph Rowntree Trust.

- Department of Education, E. a. W. 2009. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace.
- Department of Work and Pensions. 2012. *Get Britain Working* [Online]. London: Department of Work and Pensions. Available: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/get-britain-working/> [Accessed 21 August 2012].
- Fleer, M. & Raban, B. 2005. Literacy and numeracy that counts from birth to five years: A review of the literature. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Goodman, A., Sibieta, L. & Washbrook, E. 2009. Inequalities in educational outcomes among children aged 3 to 16: Final report for the National Equality Panel. London: National Equality Panel.
- Heinämäki, L. 2011. Early Childhood Education in Finland. Potsdam: Liberal Institute.
- Horowitz, J. L. & Garber, J. 2006. The prevention of depressive symptoms in Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of Counselling and Clinical Psychology*, **74**, 401-415.
- Mabelis, J. & Marryat, L. 2011. Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years. *Growing Up in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- MacBride, G. 2010. Nursery Education: Research Review. EIS.
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004. Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. Helsinki: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
- NCCA 2009. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education Audit: Similarities and differences. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.
- NEF 2009. Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all. London: New Economics Foundation.
- OECD 2006. Starting Strong II, Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- OECD. 2013. *OECD Family database* [Online]. Geneva: OECD. Available: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm#child_outcomes [Accessed 15 April 2013].

- ONS 2011. Childcare and early years survey of parents 2011. London: Office for National Statistics.
- Parekh, A., Kenway, P. & MacInnes, T. 2010. Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Scotland 2010 York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Rapee, R. M., Wignall, A., Sheffield, J., Kowalenko, N., Davis, A., McLoone, J. & Spence, S. H. 2006. Adolescents' Reactions to Universal and Indicated Prevention Programs for Depression: Perceived Stigma and Consumer Satisfaction. *Prevention Science*, 7, 167-177.
- Resolution Foundation. 2012. *Black Friday as Chancellor wields axe to Tax Credits* [Online]. Resolution Foundation. Available: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/> [Accessed 6 April 2012].
- Riggall, A. & Sharp, C. 2008. The Structure of Primary Education: England and Other countries. Cambridge: NFER.
- Sawyer, M., Arney, F., Baghurst, P., Clark, J., Graetz, B., Kosky, R., Nurcombe, B., Patton, G., Prior, M., Raphael, B., Rey, J., Whaites, L. & Zubrick, S. 2000. The mental health of young people in Australia: Child and adolescent component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Canberra, ACT: Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.
- Scottish Family Information Service. 2013a. *Funding for Childcare* [Online]. Scottish Family Information Service. Available: <https://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/NationalCategoryDetail.aspx?ncid=2> [Accessed 18 April 2013].
- Scottish Family Information Service. 2013b. *Pre-School Education: Choosing Pre-School Education for Your 3 or 4 year old* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Family Information Service. Available: <http://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/NationalCategoryDetail.aspx?ncid=7> [Accessed 18 April 2013].
- Scottish Government 2008. The Early Years Framework. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government. 2009. *Pre-School and Childcare Statistics 2009* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/09/23100810> [Accessed 18 April 2013].
- Scottish Government 2010a. Child Poverty in Scotland: a brief overview of the evidence. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government 2010b. The Financial Impact of Early Years Interventions in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

- Scottish Government 2010c. Tackling Child Poverty in Scotland: A Discussion Paper. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government. 2011a. *Early Years and Early Action Fund* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/03/08105456> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Scottish Government. 2011b. *Free childcare for vulnerable children* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government,. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/12/21140320> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Scottish Government. 2011c. *Primary school capacity by local authority* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Pubs-Pre-SchoolEducation> [Accessed 23 July 2013].
- Scottish Government. 2012a. *A Scotland for Children: A Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill: Chapter Two - A Scotland for each Child* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181/5> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Scottish Government 2012b. Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government. 2013a. *New £20 million funding stream for third sector* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/06/earlyyears29062012> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Scottish Government. 2013b. *Scottish Draft Budget 2013-14: Chapter 5 Education and Lifelong Learning* [Online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/7829/7> [Accessed 17 April 2013].
- Scottish Parliament 2011. Report on Preventative Spending: Early Years. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.
- Shochet, I. & Ham, D. 2004. Universal School-based Approaches to Preventing Adolescent Depression: Past Findings and Future Directions of the Resourceful Adolescent Program. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, **6**, 17-25.
- Síolta 2012a. Research Digest: Standard 6 Play. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.
- Síolta 2012b. Research Digest: Standard 7 Curriculum. Dublin: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

- Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B. & Elliot, K. 2003. *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from the Pre-School period*. Nottingham: DfES.
- The Lord Laming 2009. *Children in England: A Progress Report*. London: The House of Commons.
- Vaux, G. 2007. *Welfare rights: Poverty progress in reverse as tax-credit ladder proves shaky* [Online]. Community Care.co.uk. Available: <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2007/06/14/104797/Welfare-rights-Poverty-progress-in-reverse-as-tax-credit-ladder-proves.htm> [Accessed 2 August 2010].
- Williams, M. 2011. Anger as second council cuts pre-school funding. *The Herald*, 8 November.
- Williams, M. 2012. Choice of nurseries curbed Teaching unions 'must fight cuts'. *The Herald*, 27 December.