Agenda

Emily Tanner
- Aims and evaluation design
- Use of children’s centres

Kathy Sylva
- Children’s centre provision

Pamela Sammons
- The effectiveness of children’s centres on family and child outcomes
Aims and evaluation design
Aims of ECCE

To understand the effectiveness of children’s centres in improving outcomes for children and parents in relation to:

- management approaches
- delivery of services
- patterns of service use
- cost of provision.

Milestone: assessment of child and parent outcomes at 3 years.
Purpose of children’s centres

“...to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

• child development and school readiness;
• parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
• child and family health and life chances.”

(DfE, 2013)
National survey of 500+ centre managers in disadvantaged areas
- Profile of services, staff, location, users and finance
- 128 centres in next stages
- Follow up survey to assess change over 2 yrs

Longitudinal study of children and their families
- Families registered with centres
- Interviewed face2face when children 1, 2 and 3
- Final sample of 2,600 followed to end of Foundation Stage
- Data on service use, family circumstances, health and well-being

Service delivery, multi-agency working and centre ‘reach’
- Detailed data collection over 3 days
- Investigation of activities and services, leadership, evidence-based practice, parent support services and partnership working
- Assessment of the reach of centres

Impact analysis
- Analysis explores outcomes at ages 3 and 5 (including social-emotional and cognitive) in relation to different types of centre services and patterns of use

Cost case studies in 24 centres
- Assess costs of different services

Cost benefit analysis
- Combines cost data with impact analysis to assess effectiveness and benefits of centres in relation to cost
Use of children’s centres
The services families used

- Most commonly used services (pre-natal to age 3): stay and play/play and learn groups, midwife/HV clinics.
- Some services were used by very low proportions such as relationship support, ESOL and first aid courses.
- Similar services accessed outside of children’s centres (midwife/health visitor drop in 31%, baby sport/exercise 26%, stay and play 25%, antenatal classes 21%).
Reaching the most disadvantaged

- Use of services reduced as children got older. 85% registered families used a service at age 1, falling to 54% at age 3.
- Early education / childcare and speech / language therapy - the only services used more at age 3 than age 1.
- Low income and non-working families more likely to stay engaged and more likely to use targeted services and early ed/childcare.
- Disadvantaged families (non-working parents and those with poorer mental health) used more services directly provided by the children’s centre or signposted by the centre.
Parents’ use of childcare and early education

- Shift from full day childcare and early ed to part-time targeted places.
- Survey of managers showed decline in FT childcare (77% 2011 – 51% 2013) and increase in part-day sessions (34% 2011 – 62% 2013).
- Reflects emphasis on offering funded two year old places to disadvantaged families.
- 74% attended childcare between birth and age 3. Mostly day nurseries and playgroups.
Reports so far

Published reports:

- A baseline survey of children’s centre managers (2012)
- First report on costs of delivering different services (2012)
- A baseline survey of children and families using children’s centres (2013)
- First report on children’s centre delivery (2013)
- Reach of children’s centres and their neighbourhoods (2014)
- First report on parenting services (2014)
- Synthesis report on organisation, services and reach of children’s centres (2015)
- Follow up survey of children’s centre managers (2015)
- Follow up survey of children and families using children’s centres (2015)
- Impact of children’s centres at age 3 (2015)
- Changes in resourcing and characteristics (2015)

Still to come:

- Value for money report (2016)
Links to reports

Thank you

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