

News links from July 2022

The Changing Face of Early Childhood

[The Nuffield Foundation](#) published a report of their vision for early childhood based on evidence reviewed in their six-part [Changing face of early childhood](#) series. [Bringing up the next generation: from research to policy](#) concludes that families are in urgent need of better support. Two-fifths of children do not reach their expected level of development by age five and more than a third of families with young children are living in poverty. The Foundation calls for an ambitious early childhood strategy, underpinned by clear objectives, sustained investment, joined up services and the principle of early intervention, and sets out four key policy goals:

- Services understand and respond to the needs of all families with young children in the round, providing a continuum of support for parents, from light-touch guidance to more intensive support for those in need.
- Parents to have a choice about how they care for their children, requiring action from government in terms of parental leave entitlement, family-friendly workplaces, and enabling a balance between work and care.
- An early education and care system supports all young children's learning. Formal education and childcare is now a near-universal experience and a whole system review is needed.
- A societal commitment to tackling the causes and effects of early childhood poverty. Rates of poverty have risen since 2013 and are highest for families with a child under five – standing at 36%.

Childcare

The [Conservative Policy Exchange](#) asked whether the Government's long awaited childcare reforms go far enough. The main aim is to keep the quality of the option whilst reducing costs but with the cost of childcare having risen so steeply over the past 10 years it is argued that further reform is needed. [Read the article.](#)

Education in Early Years Providers

[Ofsted](#) have published [Education recovery in early years providers: summer 2022](#), looking at the continuing effects of the pandemic on children in England.

- Communication and language development continue to be affected
- An increased number of children have been referred for additional support
- Some children are still lacking confidence in social settings
- There are some concerns about children's physical development
- Fewer than expected children are ready for the move up to Reception
- Providers have had fewer than usual 2-year-olds taking up their funded places
- Providers have continued to struggle to recruit and retain high-quality qualified staff.

Mental Health

Helen Clark, Director of the [Child Mental Health Charter Campaign](#) encouraged readers of Nursery Management Today to ask their MP to sign Early Day Motion 251 tabled by Tony Lloyd MP.

The EDM calls for fully-funded early intervention and preventive strategies within schools and in the community to help address children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

[Read the article](#) [Read the EDM](#)

Poverty

[End Child Poverty](#) campaigners warn of an increase of numbers of children living below the poverty line with figures for the north east of particular concern where almost two-fifths of children live in poverty. The figure for 20-21 is 38% (up from 26% in 2014). Rates also rose in Wales (34%), compared with an English, Scottish and NI averages of 29%, 24% and 24%. The UK average was 27%.

[Read the Guardian article](#)

Anxiety

Lord Lothian tabled a written question about anti-anxiety medication prescriptions to under 18s in England and the answer revealed that the number had risen to 122,181 in 2021/22 from 96,756 in 2019/20 and 77,696 in 2017/18. There was an increase of almost two-thirds over the past four years - including drugs that can become addictive. The mental health charity [Young Minds](#) said it was yet another sign of the crisis in mental health services for young people. [Read the question](#)

Children's Rights

The [Children's Rights Alliance for England](#) (CRAE) have issued a [Call for Written Evidence](#): to inform their submission to the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2022](#). The UN Committee is examining the UK in 2023 on its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The last review of the UK was in 2016. The examination presents a key opportunity for civil society to raise important issues of concern affecting children's rights with the UK Government and the UN Committee and to highlight where action is needed, as well as outline where progress has been made.

CRAE will be leading this process on behalf of civil society in England and [invites written evidence](#) to inform their submission to the UN Committee. The deadline is 5th September 2022.

The Childhood Policy Programme

The [British Academy's](#) Childhood Policy Programme, which began in 2018, has investigated how policymaking and research related to children has changed in the four UK nations. This programme seeks to re-frame debates around childhood and break down silos in order to explore new conceptualisations of the roles of children in policymaking.

The final report, released in July, centred around themes that emerged from earlier phases: being a child vs becoming an adult; children's rights; children's voices and participation in policymaking.

[Read an overview of the programme](#)

[Read the final report](#)

Young Children and Nutrition

The [Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition](#) (SACN) is inviting comments on the scientific content of its draft report '[Feeding young children aged 1 to 5 years](#)' and the report's supporting documents.

Contributors are asked to submit comments relating to the scientific content of the report and to draw the committee's attention to any evidence that it may have missed. The deadline is 16th September 2022.

[Read the consultation guidelines](#)

[Read the framework for the evaluation of evidence](#)

[Read the draft report](#)