

**The Benefits of Early Intervention**

**The Business Case for Assessing and Securing Sufficiency for Children with SEND**



[www.dingley.org.uk](http://www.dingley.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/dingleygroup](http://www.facebook.com/dingleygroup)

Twitter @dingley

Instagram @dingleyspromise

[www.linkedin.com/company/dingleyspromise](http://www.linkedin.com/company/dingleyspromise)

**Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Heading**   | **Page Number**  |
| 1. Introduction

  | 3 |
| 1. Why Investment is Essential Now More Than Ever

  | 3 |
| 1. The Evidence Base for Early Intervention and Impact on Children with SEND

  | 5 |
| 1. Our Interrelated Legal Requirements and Risk of Legal Challenge

  | 7 |
| 1. The Financial Case  – short, medium, and long-term impacts of not investing

5.1 Case Study – Financial Impact of an Assessment and Brokerage Centre Service | 911 |
| 1. Outcomes for Wider Children’s Services

  | 12 |
| 1. Potential Outcomes for the Whole Council

  | 13 |
| 1. Summary and Next Steps You Can Take

  | 14 |

1. **Introduction**

The paper has been written by Dingley’s Promise, a registered charity supporting inclusion in the early years nationally.  As a provider of specialist early years provision across the country, we aim to support inclusion in mainstream settings wherever possible and appropriate. We also work nationally with local authorities and partners, as well as central government, to drive an inclusion movement for young children with SEND.

Our main aim for this paper, is to support Local Authority (LA) leaders to justifying the business case for investment and assessment require when securing childcare sufficiency for children with SEND, in accordance with their statutory duties. It may also support wider early intervention agendas and has been designed to enable the reader to use key sections in their own papers and reports.

From our extensive work with LAs, providers, and families nationally, we are aware that with each expansion of the early years entitlements nationally, it has negatively impacted upon the ability of children with SEND to access the 15 hour entitlements, let alone 30. As a consequence, there are significant risks as the new early years entitlements expand, that provision for children with SEND will again drop.

This paper draws on our experiences of working nationally supporting LAs, parents, providers and a range of stakeholders and decision makers, through the introduction of many new national policies and entitlements.

1. **Why Investment is Essential Now More Than Ever**

We are aware that LAs are under significant pressure to “do more with less”. Strategic priorities to make savings and find efficiencies are coupled with an acute focus on safeguarding following high-profile cases, and a constant threat of inspection and intervention.

LAs consistently report increasing numbers of children with SEND. There is a growing pressure on special school places and supported provision within mainstream. In Solihull for example they report an increase in children starting school with an education health and care plan (EHCP) of over 200% since 2019.

The increased cost of living is impacting on both our early years providers market, and on families.  The sector faces significant sustainability challenges, in particular around the recruitment and retention of staff. There is also an increase in demand for childcare to support low income working families, and even greater need for families to work.[[1]](#footnote-1)  Where research has been conducted it has found a direct correlation families affected by poverty and those caring for a child with SEND.

In Swindon for example local research conducted in 2022 indicated that whilst 94% of the overall eligible population of 2, 3 and 4 years olds access the full early years entitlements, just 45% of children with SEND were able to do so.

The research also found a significant disparity between mothers who are able to work, with just 16% of mothers of children with SEND working, compared to 61% of the general population of mothers in that area.[[2]](#footnote-2) Research also found that children with SEND were more likely to face a part time or deferred entry to school than their peers.

This sobering information reflects that despite the consensus of agreement over the positive impacts of early intervention in our years for children with SEND, this are the group accessing the entitlements the least. This continues to have a direct impact on their long-term outcomes and increases the gap between them and their mainstream peers.

The new early years entitlements pose a real opportunity to ensure children are accessing early years education sooner. The Government confirmed that early years SEND funding streams will be extended to cover all of the new entitlement hours to support children with SEND to access[[3]](#footnote-3). This has the potential for a number of very positive impacts:

* Enabling earlier intervention and in turn lead to better life outcomes for our children in the future.
* Helping settings who have been struggling with only being given funding for part of children’s hours to access the full funding and remove the need for settings to self-fund.
* Supporting LAs to see younger children with SEND accessing their entitlements and getting the best early intervention.
* More children should have the opportunity to moving on to mainstream education/
* A greater number of parents could feel supported from the beginning of their child’s educational journey.

These factors provide us with a unique opportunity to recalibrate how we manage early intervention as a fundamental part of our change management process.

The expansion of early years entitlements could, if embedded and owned strategically, support a shift in both demand and supply of services in the early years.

1. **The Evidence Base for Early Intervention and Impact on Children with SEND**

Early intervention and good early years provision has consistently evidenced a return on investment. This section offers some quotes and links to some of the research.

The Early Intervention Foundation produced a report in 2017 (the Cost of Late Intervention) stating that:[[4]](#footnote-4)

*“Nearly £17 billion per year – equivalent to £287 per person – is spent in England and Wales by the state on the cost of late intervention.”*

The return on investment for individuals and services collectively is also well documented. The Heckman Curve[[5]](#footnote-5) is illustrated here:



*“The importance of the early years in laying the building blocks for a child’s physical development, social and emotional well-being, and cognitive and linguistic capabilities is evidenced by a large, interdisciplinary body of research.  As such, early childhood and the dynamics and challenges of family life are fundamental to considering how we might build a more resilient, productive, and cohesive society.”*

**The changing face of early childhood in the UK**

**The Nuffield Foundation July 22**

*“Science tells us that a child’s experiences from conception through their first five years will go on to shape their next 50. It tells us that the kind of children we raise today will reflect the kind of world we will live in tomorrow. It tells us that investing in the start of life is not an indulgence, but economically, socially, and psychologically vital to a prosperous society.*

**Jason Knauf, CEO of the Royal Foundation, December 2020**

**Ipsos MORI | State of the Nation: Understanding Public Attitudes to the Early Years, November 2020**

Evidence that supports investment in the early years continues to grow, however, we have witnessed a series of challenges within our public sector over recent years, which prevented a coordinated approach to make this impact.

The number of children with SEND support and EHCPs has been rising since 2016 according to Government statistics[[6]](#footnote-6), and research from Dingley’s Promise in 2023[[7]](#footnote-7) found that 95% of settings reported that the number of children with SEND had risen in the past year alone.

We know that disadvantage significantly impacts on child outcomes, and it is often a key factor in targeted approaches to support take up of early years provision. Where areas have layered the data sets for disadvantage and SEND together, we can see a direct correlation. The report “Investing in Early Intervention” from May 2022 documents similar concerns;[[8]](#footnote-8)

“*Children with disabilities are at* ***greater risk*** *than non-disabled children* ***of experiencing both social and health inequalities.***

***Social inequalities***

*Children with learning disabilities are* ***more likely to experience a range of social inequalities*** *than typically developing children. (Figure 1)*

*Researchhas identified that children with learning disabilities across childhood and adolescence are, compared to other children:*

*• 1.6 times more likely to be living in a family in* ***income poverty***

*• 2.1 times more likely to have* ***no adult in paid work*** *in the household*

*• 1.4 times more likely to have a mother with* ***mental health problems***

*• 3.3 times more likely to have a mother with* ***poor physical health***

*• 1.5 times more likely to experience two or more negative life events such as* ***bereavement and sexual abuse***

*• 1.5 times more likely to experience* ***poor family functioning****, for example, a decreased ability to problem solve or talk through problems as a family*

*• 1.3 times more likely to live in a* ***single parent household***

*• 1.9 times more likely to have a* ***primary carer with no educational qualifications”***

We regularly hear reports from LAs and families, that when families are looking for an early years place for a child with SEND, they are turned away. This often happens only after disclosing their child’s additional needs. The impacts on day-to-day life can be extensive and devastating. Some of our parents report:

*“Trying to find childcare was horrific, I ended up seeing my doctor I was so worried about my child, having to give up work and money.”*

*“My mental health was suffering anyway. I needed a break from 24/7 caring and I just kept being told there were no spaces or I had to go through yet another process when other families just got theirs.”*

*“Work was an outlet for me as well as an income source, but I had to move my work to weekends which means I cram 20 hrs work into 2 days and have no time as a family.”*

Parent representatives on the Dingley’s Promise Parent Board

1. **Our Interrelated Legal Requirements and Risk of Legal Challenge**

The Childcare Act[[9]](#footnote-9) 2006 and 16 sections 6, 7, 8 and 9, require LAs to secure childcare for working parents and the early education entitlements, whilst also outlining the LA powers to do so.  The duties specify that provision for children with SEND should be secured for children up to the age of 18.

The Childcare Act was a pioneering piece of legislation, as it was the first act to be exclusively concerned with early years and childcare and early childhood services.  The 3 key drivers in this act are:

• To reduce child poverty

• To reduce inequalities between children

• To improve well-being for young children

The Childcare Act enables a framework for delivery (and legal challenge) under three key areas:

The ‘early years outcomes duties’ require the provision of early childhood services and joint working between agencies to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and narrow the gap.  The outcomes duties also enable pooled budgets to support joint delivery, with the aim of supporting easy to access services from pre-birth to 5, at a universal and more targeted level.

The ‘sufficiency duties’ require LAs to ensure sufficient early education and childcare.  Our least advantaged families are (at the time of writing) legally entitled to the early years education as children turn two, and all families of children aged 3 and 4. Working families are entitled to additional hours for 3 and 4-year-olds and the entitlements aim to support child development but also remove a barrier to employment by supporting access and affordability.

The sufficiency duties also require LAs to secure childcare for children aged 0-14, (or 18 for children with a disability) with the aim of enabling parents to take part in employment and employment-related activities. The role of the LA in securing sufficient places requires the use of data and a market management approach which uses parental demand, encouraging new start-ups and providing the workforce with training and business support.

The ‘information duties’ require LAs to ensure information is provided to both childcare providers and families, in order to meet their other childcare duties.

These legislative requirements are interdependent on each other.  For example, improving the well-being of young children is reliant on securing integrated early childhood services, which support access to early education and childcare.  Securing sufficient childcare requires information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents, in order that they may demand (ask for) a high-quality supply.

 Whilst the requirements for producing and publishing childcare sufficiency assessments were repealed through the Children and Families Act 2014[[10]](#footnote-10) it is arguably impossible to evidence that an LA has taken “reasonable steps” to secure childcare if they not first assessed the market.

The responsibilities of LAs were further defined by the Children and Families Act 2014, which seeks to improve services for vulnerable children and to support families. It underpinned wider reforms and policies to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background. This is further strengthened by the Equalities Act 2010 (which superseded the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

This legislation is also underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC) (1992). The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that all children are entitled to.

The governments green paper SEND Review: right support, right place, right time[[11]](#footnote-11) further commits us all to identifying need at the earliest opportunity in high quality early years provision, and will bring a series of new requirements on LAs which will include ensuring families are aware of, and part of planning provision. These actions will inevitably require us to have a greater understanding of the supply and demand for provision locally, in order to plan for effective places.

Worryingly, there appears to be a general level of acceptance by families of children with SEND, that they are somehow ‘less entitled’ to their early education and childcare provision than other families. We have also heard through our own consultations with parents, that many give up employment as a result of not having the right early years provision for their children.  We know this families are further impacted at transition phase, where many parents are forced to give up again many give up employment if their child is only able to take up a part time place or reduced hours.  It is therefore imperative that LAs consider taking all reasonable steps to secure sufficient places by both measuring and then managing the sufficiency of the local market.

1. **The Financial Case  – Short, medium, and long-term impacts of not investing**

There is, of course, an immediate financial risk to the LA from potential legal challenge where families cannot access their legal entitlements. The costs of a legal challenge alone can take up funds which could otherwise be supporting children. Shockingly, in 2023, local authorities won only 1.7% of SEND appeals at a cost of £99.2 million.[[12]](#footnote-12)

For every place not taken up there is a loss of direct income to the LA, as funding from central government is based on take up locally.  An element of this funding is also retained for central functions in the LA such as administration and management, and includes the measuring of sufficiency.   LAs could calculate lost income, for example if the cost of an early education place is approximated to be £4000 per year per child, for every 10 children who do not take up their early years entitlements approximately £40,000 of income is lost to both the LA and sector.

We recognise the further impacts of this loss of potential income to the early years and childcare sector which will inevitably impact negatively on both the quality and sufficiency of places locally.  The childcare sector is of course a large employer in its own right, as well as an enabler for families (in particular women) to work.

Children who are not supported in the early years are far more likely to require specialist support when they are identified, frequently as late as at school age. This significantly impacts on costs for public services, which in many cases could be reduced or even avoided if needs and pathways are supported earlier, as described in more detail in the case study on page 11.

The cost to families, in terms of the lack of access to their entitlements of 15 and 30 hours of early education and childcare, as well as the loss of income through limited access to employment should be considered.  We know that maternal education, mental health, and low-income levels[[13]](#footnote-13) impact heavily on child outcomes.

It is also worth remembering that the vast majority of early years and childcare provision is delivered by the private and voluntary sector who, in turn attract a percentage of additional funding, generated through fees, grants and other contributions. This makes investment in activity to support sufficiency places, along with good pathways *to*, and supporting take-up *of,* the early years entitlement vital for efficiencies, as well as being critical to improved outcomes.

Recognising the impact of early intervention, it is critical that we address the use of the High Needs Block. This funding should be given for children in the early years who have high needs [[14]](#footnote-14), while SEN Inclusion Funding is designed for those with emerging needs.[[15]](#footnote-15)

In some LAs, Inclusion Funding has become the sole provider of early years SEND funding, with the high needs block funding being dominated by schools. We believe that the best use of this funding is to also provide the right early intervention to children with high needs in the early years. This is critical for children’s outcomes, and also for long term spending in the LA, as investing earlier is cheaper and will longer term reduce the need to spend later and without the impact of leading to the same positive outcomes or opportunities for children.

Across the country, high needs block funding is overspent due to rises in numbers of children needing support. As places become scarce, so parents learn not to trust that the system can cater to the needs of their child and this in turn leads to even more requests for support. This cycle of a lack of high-quality appropriate provision, and worsening trust in the system from parents, needs to change in order to reduce the pressure on the system. A key way to improve this is to invest in early  intervention for children that need it, to ensure that by the time they reach primary school they have had the best chance to develop. Their families would have experienced getting the right support, either from the mainstream or specialist education system, and therefore trust that their child will be properly supported in education. It is also worth noting that parents who do not trust the system are likely to believe that the only way for their children to get the right support is to go for an EHCP and often special school placements, even if educators believe they could thrive in the mainstream.

A high proportion of the early years and childcare sector report being under significant financial pressure for some time, with concerns around sustainability, recruitment and retention being prevalent for a number of years. These pressures are reported by LAs to have a disproportionally negative effect on the ability of the sector to meet the needs of children with SEND. Any additional pressures on resources, (time and costs), perceived or actual, are highly likely to result in children being turned away as the pressure to fill places as economically as possible is vital to setting sustainability.

Research by the Early Years Alliance in 2022[[16]](#footnote-16) found that 92% of settings reported having to spend their own money on SEND support – something that they are increasingly unable to do in the difficult financial situation they are in. This directly leads to families being turned away when the settings realise their child has SEND – Dingley's Promise research[[17]](#footnote-17) found that one in five children had been turned away, and the Early Years Alliance found that 28% of settings had admitted turning children with SEND away back in 2022. The turning away of our children is something that is growing and is worryingly becoming a norm in the sector despite equality duties.

The move to the new EYFS with its focus on reducing tracking of children is good news in general but could also be seen as a barrier to wider inclusive practice. The difference between working with a child with SEND where it is necessary to provide evidence to LAs of their needs to access funding, compared to working with other children who now have much reduced paperwork and tracking, is stark. For settings already struggling to support children with SEND effectively, this is another reason why settings may decide not to admit a child with SEND.

 **5.1 Case Study – The Cost Benefits of an Assessment and Brokerage Centre Service**

Our service in West Berkshire supports around 50 families per year, and of these 50 around 25 children attend our Centre. When children come to us, they are unable to attend mainstream provision for a number of reasons. There may be a lack of parental confidence, a lack of skills in mainstream settings or perceived behaviours that challenge those mainstream settings. However, in the last year, 90% of the children that left us went to the mainstream rather than to specialist settings.

Around half of our children leave us each year and the cost of a special school place is around £60,000 per year. The average cost of a mainstream school place in England is approximately £7,460 per year. This means each child who goes to special school costs approximately £52,540 per annum.

This means that of the expected 12 children who leave our Centre annually, we would expect around 10 of them to transition to the mainstream. Just one year of these children being in mainstream education would then save the LA £525,000 per year.

This number increases annually as the children stay in mainstream education, making the financial impact cumulative to a maximum of £34,650,000 per annum assuming all ten children stayed in mainstream education until the end of year 11. It is of course very unlikely the whole cohort will stay in mainstream education for the whole of their journey, but this figure is the maximum annual saving possible.

The cost of this provision in 2023-24 will be £180,000 per year. In terms of investment and reward per child, the cost of 15 hours in our centre for one child per year is £11,700, or £23,400 for two years.  We have worked out scenarios for one and two years in our provision, and then cross referenced with the time children spend in the mainstream after they leave us. The numbers are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scenarios**  | **Total cost**  | **Total saving (if 1 yr at DP)**  | **Total saving (if 2 yrs at DP)**  | **ROI per £1 invested (in DP for 1yr)**  | **ROI per £1 invested (in DP for 2yrs)**  |
| One year in mainstream  | £52,500  | £40,800  | £29,100  | £3.49  | £1.24  |
| Two years in mainstream  | £105,000  | £81,600  | £69,900  | £6.97  | £2.99  |
| Primary mainstream  | £315,000  | £204,000  | £192,300  | £17.44  | £8.22  |
| Whole education in mainstream  | £577,500  | £244,800  | £233,100  | £20.92  | £9.96  |

There is no standard time that children will need to stay with us, as we transition them to the mainstream only when they are ready, as are their families and the next setting. This means that children stay with us for a range of periods, but from the figures it is clear to see that the sooner they leave us the bigger the saving for the LA in the long term.

1. **Outcomes for Wider Children’s Services**  -

**Safeguarding and Supporting our Most Vulnerable and Least Advantaged Children.**

Consistently, for over 10 years, the highest number of Serious Case Reviews (the review which takes place after a child death in a local area), have been with children under the age of five[[18]](#footnote-18). Within the group the highest proportion has consistently been with 0 to 1—year-olds.  Clearly support through good early years provision from pre-birth to 5 offers a phenomenal opportunity to identify, support and safeguard our most vulnerable children. There are not many social workers who could afford to spend 15 or 30 hours a week with our most vulnerable children for example.

Families using  provision are more likely to be supported by related services as our sector offer an invaluable check in with parents and carers often twice a day (at drop off and pick up), and often sign post to other services.  15 hours a week (as a minimum) of high-quality intervention delivered predominantly by the private, voluntary, and independent sector is a highly effective safeguard for our most vulnerable children.

Our discussions with LAs show that where they had taken a data driven approach to understanding demand it is often our least advantaged children who access the least amount of early education.  In Swindon for example they tracked children in school with an EHCP and discovered that just 46% of children with SEND accessed their full entitlement compared with 84% of children without SEND. 10% of this group accessed no early years entitlements which effectively meant they started school with little or no support beforehand.

Alarmingly almost 80% of the group were also eligible for EYPP suggesting they are families on low incomes. This group typically went on to access school on a part time basis or had entry deferred, and we frequently hear reports that children with SEND are far more likely to be offered reduced hours in the early years and as they start school. So it seems our least advantaged children are accessing the least amount of provision, yet we know accessing early years impacts on both child and families outcomes.

**School Based SEND Support**

Most LAs report inadequate resources to support children with SEND locally across all service areas.  Early years provision can identify needs and disabilities early, moving and reducing the need for costly resources as children reach school age to the early years.  Some LAs estimated that by identifying and supporting a child in the early years with SEND to access universal early years and then school, a saving of £60,000 per child per year can be made. See case study on page 11 above.

**Health and Wellbeing**

Supporting early education for children with SEND goes beyond the provision in settings. Staff provide a unique relationship with parents and carers often connecting with them twice a day every weekday, providing advice and support as well as signposting.

Health visitors for example provide a critical point of contact for most families.  According to the national commissioning framework[[19]](#footnote-19) used by all LAs they are required to support awareness and take up of all the early years entitlements.

Health visitors are also required to work with providers for the integrated health check at 2 years.  Early years providers deliver a family support role both directly for children in the activities and services they deliver, and the contact and support they provide for families, in some cases every day at drop off and pick up.

**Family Hubs**

The range of services provided both universally and specialist support for families and young children, and the coordination of the services alongside early years providers will be enhanced through Family Hubs. This provides a unique opportunity for early intervention, supporting parents and carers to form patterns of relating with their child which will support positive development and independence from the earlier stage.

Sign posting will also be a key function for Hubs and the coordination of information. Again, this provides an opportunity to support the delivery of our information duties and ensure parent carers are aware of their entitlements and supported to take them up.

1. **Outcomes for the Whole Council**

Children are part of families, who are part of communities, who are part of society. It is essential that services for families of young children are well connected to services for adults, and the early years agenda can significantly support wider council aims in that process. This section shares some examples of how the connections could be realised.

**Regeneration, Employment and Housing**

Without a high quality and sustainable childcare sector our local economy as a whole will also be impacted on as a percentage of our workforce at any one time will require childcare to be able to work.  The issues disproportionally effects women creating an untapped workforce.

The two leading organisations for mums in the UK, Pregnant Then Screwed and Mumsnet[[20]](#footnote-20), have conducted the biggest survey of its kind into the impact childcare costs are having on families.

The survey of **26,962**parents of young children found that:

*“62% say that the cost of childcare is now the same or more than their rent/mortgage. This rises to 73% for single parents, and 73% for parents who work full time.*

*43% of mothers said that the cost of childcare has made them consider leaving their job.*

*40% of mothers said they have had to work fewer hours than they would like because of childcare costs.”*

Early years services can both break an intergenerational cycle of deprivation and support an immediate childcare need to enable families to take up employment and employment related pathways.

The childcare market itself is also a substantial and developing sector.  It also nurtures a diverse workforce, from parent volunteers and apprenticeships to chain nursery managers and self-employed childminders.

Early years and childcare supports families into employment and lifts families out of poverty.  These shared objectives provide a rational for the duty on LAs to work with partner agencies.  It is essential that the LA shares regular information with partners on support available to families, and that they receive regular intelligence about demand and supply (as an indicator of sufficiency for disadvantaged families).

**Capital strategies**

Most LAs are working to reduce their physical buildings and in the process, support the local economy and where possible create an income stream.  Childcare development remains a LA duty (ensuring sufficient childcare) and we have seen libraries, school caretaker bungalows, youth facilities and care homes all being converted for childcare and early years service delivery purposes.  Creating centres such as the one we describe in our case study on page 10 could support good use of buildings and create a cost benefit as well a supporting compliance.

**Corporate Communications and Public Relations**

Most LAs will have targets to improve public relations and engagement with the local communities they serve. LAs should engage their communications teams to create positive ‘good news’ stories and vastly increase social media following for the whole council as a result.  The information duties require LAs to inform families about early years entitlements and the range of services supporting the early years and childcare two. Families of 0 to 14 year olds (16 for children with SEND), make up a significant proportion of any population, the potential reach for each LA.

1. **Summary and Next Steps You Can Take**

Justifying the case for change can become yet another task added onto an ever growing to-do list. From our experience LA leaders, just like providers, are extremely committed to inclusion, but struggle with a range of priorities, some of which may be conflicting.

In many areas, the lead for early years and sufficiency may sit entirely separately from those leading inclusion in the early years, and in some areas, leadership is combined or even missing altogether. This section aims to suggest some considerations in raising the strategic profile and council wide commitment to early intervention and early years inclusion.

**Next Steps You Can Take:**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Do you have an early years and childcare strategy which has a central focus on early years inclusion throughout? Developing an overarching strategy based on the legal requirements of the Childcare Act can help create structure for any new early years and childcare related policies, and evidence “reasonable steps” are taken to secure compliance.
 |
| 1. Have you engaged your lead member for children's services in a conversation about the risk of legal challenge as the new entitlements roll out? Members can be supportive in ensuring the wider council benefits are realised. They can also support the financial arguments for early intervention across a range of agendas.
 |
| 1. Does your service structure (the council organisational chart) reflect your legal requirements and needs of delivery? This is particularly important for areas who may have lost strategic posts which drive forward the agenda locally. We often hear that early years inclusion is everybody's business, but without dedicated resource it can quite quickly become nobodies.
 |
| 1. Have you clearly articulated the existing funding streams and case for change by illustrating the cost benefits of early intervention? Many senior managers and members are firefighting and won't know the detail that you do. Nationally in children’s services there is often a focus on provision for school-age children and safeguarding, and the opportunities to stop and think about the benefits of early intervention are not always there.
 |
| 1. Can you identify your champions? Lots of senior decision-makers have been around for a while, and some may have heard of previous early intervention programmes which were supported and successful. Can you create a think tank for those interested who might be able to help you develop a plan to raise awareness and gain support.
 |
| 1. Can you tailor your messages to gain support from different quarters? As you can see from this paper there are different benefits of considering early intervention for different departments and agencies. Tailoring your messages and slowly but surely having individual conversations may also help your cause.
 |
| 1. Can your schools forum be an enabling platform? Schools forums technically play an advisory role in setting budgets for early years on schools. Ensuring earliest representation is critical, however supporting awareness and understanding of the broader legal functions of the LA with regard to early years and early intervention is critical. Regularly updating the forum and ensuring a basic understanding will support.
 |
| 1. Do you use publicity and marketing to continually raise the profile of early years and early years inclusion in general? There is a lot of negative press out there and by regularly celebrating successes and providing positive feedback you can ensure a focus on the difference early intervention can make, as opposed to what isn't working or is lacking.
 |
| 1. It's not what you do it's the way that you do it! If you are writing a paper or inviting someone to a meeting think about the "sell". What are their priorities right now and how can your agenda support that?
 |

Finally, it's important to recognise that whilst local government agendas have grown, resources haven't always kept up. People are often asked to juggle a range of agendas and we should never assume that the parties involved in decision-making are as up to date in their knowledge on a specific service area as we are.

Institutional memory is short, as constant reorganisations change and multiply individual’s roles. Raising the profile and benefits of early intervention should therefore never be seen as a one-off task, but an ongoing conversation to support wider council objectives and maximise resources, as well as improving outcomes for all children and families.

**Authors**

Ann Van Dyke MBE

Ann.vandyke@dingley.org.uk

Catherine McLeod MBE, Chief Executive

Catherine.mcleod@dingley.org.uk

Created for Coram-Hempsalls for exclusive use February 2024

1. <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/How-are-the-lives-of-families-with-young-children-changing-Nuffield-Foundation.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/campaigns-and-research/research/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65670dd9312f40000de5d56c/Early_years_funding_-_Extension_of_the_Entitlements_Consultation_Response.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/the-heckman-curve/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://dingley.org.uk/researchsurveyfindings2023> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://cerebra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EARLY-INTERVENTION-REPORT-A4-FINAL.pdf>   [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/notes/division/6/1> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/624178c68fa8f5277c0168e7/SEND_review_right_support_right_place_right_time_accessible.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. First Tier Tribunal for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SENDIST) 2023, Ministry of Justice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2023>   [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/maternal-mental-health/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2023-to-2024/high-needs-funding-2023-to-2024-operational-guide> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024>   [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/too-little-too-late-report#:~:text=Of%20all%20respondents%20providing%20care,they%20do%20so%20'regularly>'. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://dingley.org.uk/researchsurveyfindings2023> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123286/Learning_for_the_future_-_final_analysis_of_serious_case_reviews__2017_to_2019.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-0-to-19-health-visitor-and-school-nurse-commissioning/commissioning-health-visitors-and-school-nurses-for-public-health-services-for-children-aged-0-to-19>  [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <https://pregnantthenscrewed.com/one-in-four-parents-say-that-they-have-had-to-cut-down-on-heat-food-clothing-to-pay-for-childcare/> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)