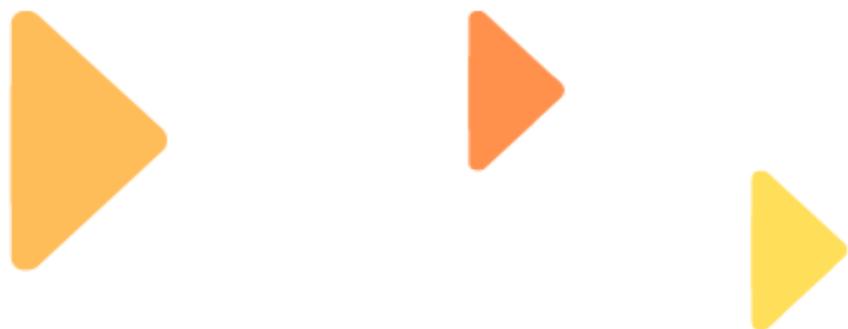


Sure Start: celebration and reflection

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Susie Owen

Deputy Director, Early Years
Department for Education



Department
for Education

Early years – a changing landscape

- **Expansion of government funded early education**
 - Early 2000s – limited funded early education
 - Now – universal 15 hrs for 3 and 4yos, 15hrs for disadvantaged 2yos, extended entitlement for 3 and 4yos of working parents
 - 8,500 more providers delivering funded places than in 2014
- **Record investment in childcare**
 - Around £6bn spent on childcare by 2020, including £3.5bn DfE plans to spend on early years entitlements this year
- **Quality of provision has improved**
 - 95% rate good of outstanding by Ofsted, up from 68% in 2010
 - SEED Quality report found significant improvements in quality since EPPSE
- **Improvements in children’s outcomes**
 - Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework introduced in 2008
 - 72% children achieving GLD compared to 52% in 2013



Current policy approach

Principled, pragmatic localism

- Ring fence funding removed
- Public health budgets devolved to local areas

- Locally driven solutions
- Diversity of service delivery models
- Variability of service levels?

Expansion of early education

- Clear evidence base for benefit of ECEC
- Universal and targeted offers

- High levels of take-up
- Impact of ECEC vs home factors?

Emphasis on service transformation

- Bridging gap between families and local services
- Troubled Families

- Better integration of services – putting families at the centre
- Too dependent on quality of local relationships?

Focus on evidence

- Creation of what works centres – EIF, EEF
- Innovation programme

- Enhanced evidence base
- Replicability and scalability?



Significant challenges remain

“28% of children finish their reception year still without the early communication and reading skills they need to thrive. It’s not acceptable and tackling it must be our shared priority. My ambition is to cut that number in half over the next ten years.” – *Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, July 2018*

On average, disadvantaged children are four months behind at age five. That grows by an additional six months by the age of 11, and a further nine months by the age of 16.



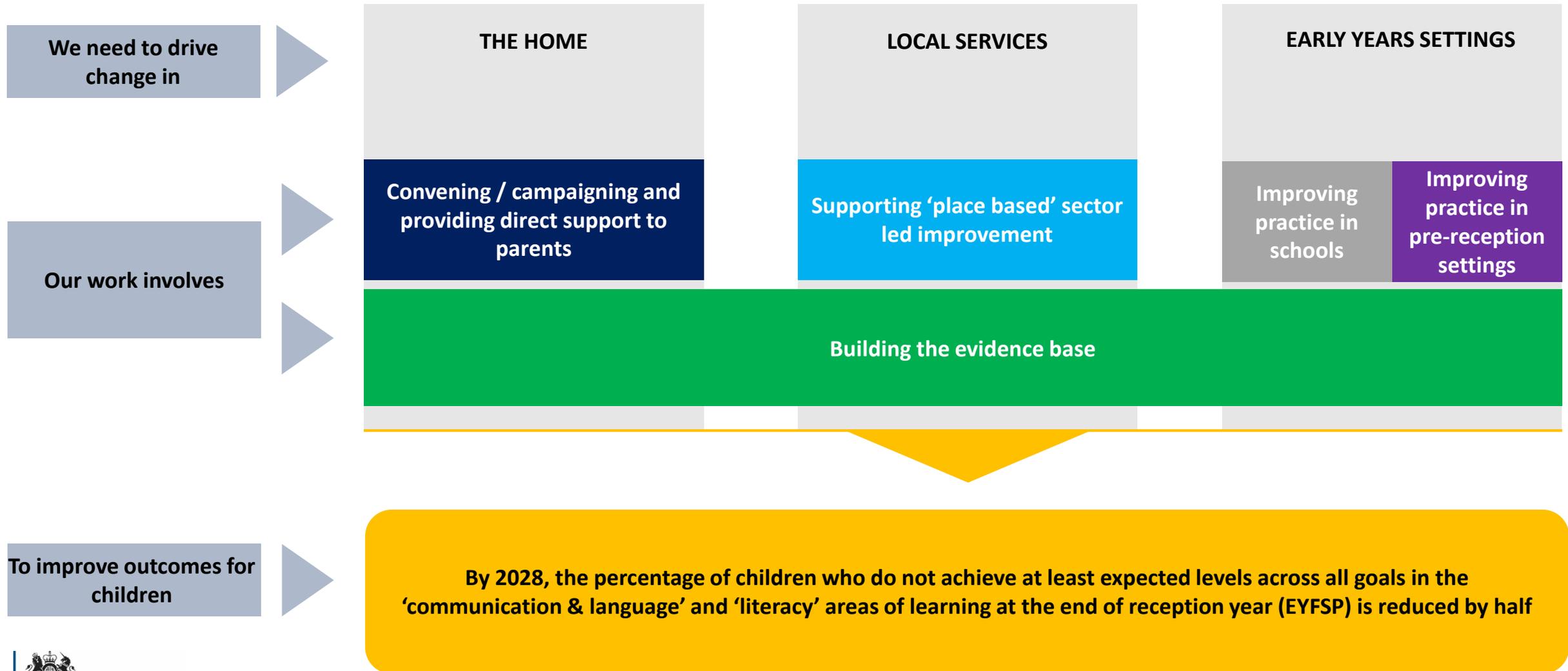
Children with poor vocabulary at age five are more than twice as likely to be unemployed when they are aged 34.

Policy context:

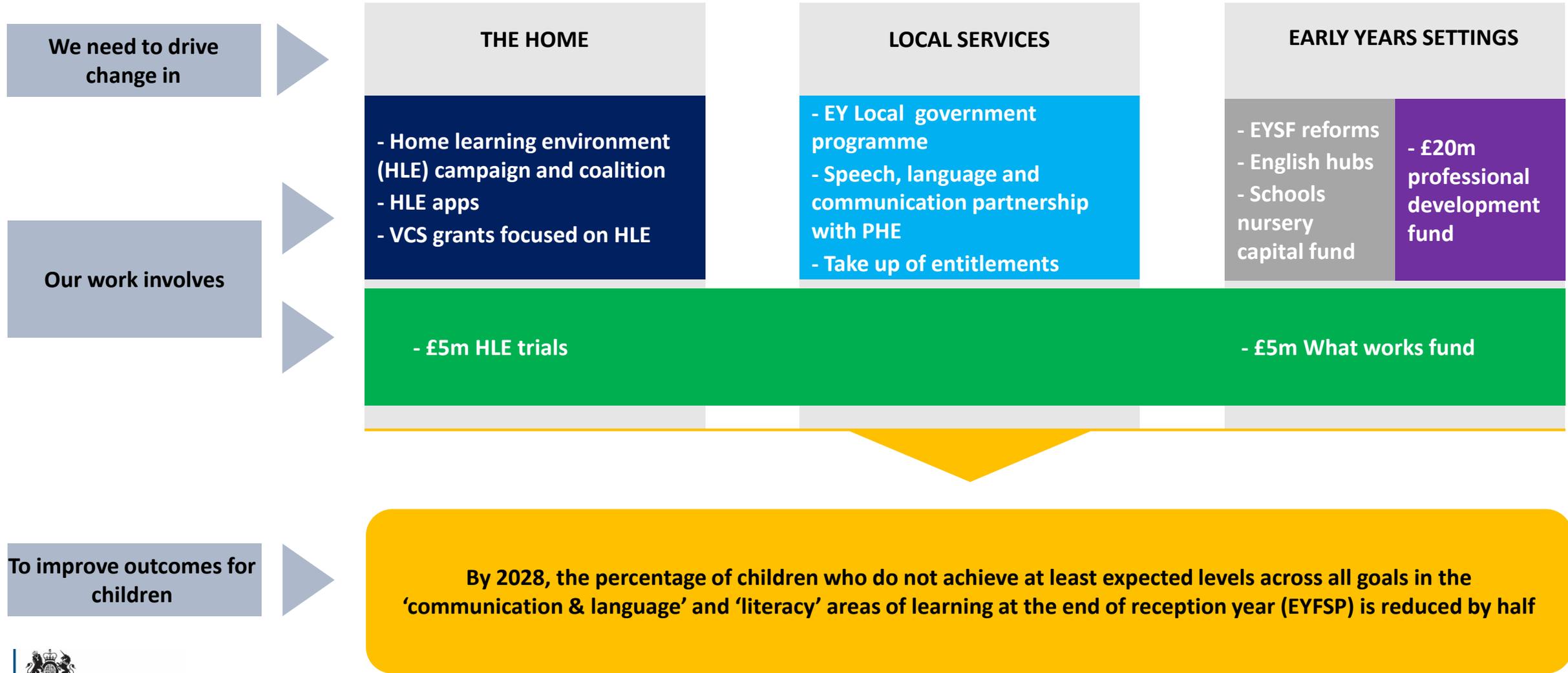
- Ministerial group on early years family services
- DHSC Prevention green paper
- Forthcoming spending review



Current DfE Early Years programme



Our social mobility programme follows this evidence to improve outcomes at age 5



Early years local government programme – local focus on speech, language & communication

Aim: to engage local leaders and stimulate, identify and spread best practice.

Focus: improving early language outcomes through high quality local services that works together effectively.

Maturity matrix

Early Outcomes Fund

Peer Review
Programme

Early years local government programme

Maturity Matrix

DIMENSIONS	KEY ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	PROGRESS LEVELS			
PLAN	1. Strategy	1.1 Vision, strategy & plan 1.2 Population needs assessment	1 BASIC LEVEL Principle accepted and commitment to action	2 EARLY PROGRESS Initial development	3 SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS Initial results achieved and positive outcomes evident	4 MATURE Embedded good practice, others learning from achievements
	2. Commissioning	2.1 Commissioning arrangements 2.2 Use of resources				
	3. Workforce Planning	3.1 Workforce analysis 3.2 Workforce development				
LEAD	4. Partnership	No sub-elements				
	5. Leadership	No sub-elements				
	6. Community Ownership	6.1 Engagement 6.2 Community assets				
DELIVER	7. Services & Interventions	7.1 Quality 7.2 Evidence-based programmes / interventions 7.3 Coordinated working				
	8. Information & Data	8.1 Data collection / use for targeting 8.2 Information sharing 8.3 Information for families				
EVALUATE	9. Outcomes	9.1 Outcomes framework 9.2 Family access & experience				
	10. Using & Generating Evidence	10.1 Using evidence well 10.2 Local evaluation				



Peer reviews

- 30 Peer reviews over 18 months
- 100 peer reviews trained to date – includes social care, education, health backgrounds
- Each review is 4 days, with optional 1 day follow up 12 months later

Early Outcomes Fund

Aims:

- To increase leadership focus at local authority level on the key issue of early language.
- To enable LAs to undertake work to improve their services and how they are delivered.
- To resource evaluation and partnership working amongst LAs that will spread innovations around the wider system.

Peer reviews – using the matrix

STEP 1: Pre-review: preparing a self assessment

- Local area stocktake – multi-agency workshop, facilitated by EIF
- Basis for discussion with LGA on KLOEs
- Informs self assessment provided to review team in advance
- Informing choices of relevant interviewees for peer review process

STEP 2: During the Review

- Conceptual framework guiding the review process, and providing a common language for review team and local area
- Specific lines of enquiry are those identified by the local area rather than covering all the dimensions of the Matrix

STEP 3: Post review:

- Guide for action planning, including links to evidence / resources
- Baseline against which to measure progress after 12 months
- Framework for a future strategy, and opportunity to connect to others using the same approach

DIMENSIONS	KEY ELEMENTS	SUB-ELEMENTS	PROGRESS LEVELS			
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	8. Information & Data	8.1 Data collection / use for reporting 8.2 Information sharing 8.3 Information for families				
	9. Outcomes	9.1 National framework 9.2 Local needs & resources				

Home Learning Environment: developing the behaviour change model



A Better Start



NSPCC

**Professor James Law
Jean Gross CBE
Professor Kathy Sylva
Naomi Eisenstadt
Professor Ted Melhuish**

THE HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE MODEL: SUMMARY

THE HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND WHY IT MATTERS

- The Home Learning Environment (HLE) is the physical home and the interactions in and around the home which implicitly and explicitly support a child's learning.
- The quality of the HLE is a key predictor of a child's early language ability and future success; positive experiences can have lasting and life changing impacts.
- Early language ability is consistently linked to later outcomes – including school attainment and job prospects.
- Children raised in middle and upper-income homes are more likely to experience a language-rich environment. By contrast, children from low-income homes are more likely to arrive at school with below-average language skills, leaving them at an educational disadvantage from the start.
- But this is not inevitable. All parents have the power to change outcomes for their children, no matter what their background.
- And we know that behaviour change approaches can work in the family setting; we can help parents to support their children's learning through public programmes, resources, brands, social marketing and broadcasting.

CREATING A POSITIVE HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- The full behaviour change model sets out the stages of speech, language and communication development from birth to age 5 and the parental actions which support a child to achieve these milestones.
- The model distils this evidence to three simple concepts:
 - Chat:** encourage talking but crucially, reciprocal communication;
 - Play:** language thrives when children interact and explore in a playful and creative manner;
 - Read:** sharing books, parents and children talking together.
- Chat, Play, Read summarises how parents can create a positive HLE, whilst remaining simple and easy to communicate through a range of channels and nudges. Chat, Play, Read can also rally and support those professionals, volunteers and communities working with families every day.

Barriers lower income families face

Capability: Parents (i) may not understand the importance of language development or the activities that can support it; (ii) may have low literacy skills, or lack confidence in their ability to support their child's language development (iii) may not see a need for these skills, and some (C2DE) parents are less likely to proactively seek information.

Opportunity: Fewer financial resources, physical environments in or near the home, and other disadvantages (e.g. poor health) may make it more difficult to provide enriching activities, and the reality of daily life can reduce parents' time for, or prioritisation of, parent-child interactions.

Motivation: Parents, and the communities that influence them, may not understand the potential benefit of early language development, or education – prioritising other areas of child development and wellbeing. They may lack confidence or networks of support.

Interventions to address these

Develop simple messages (including video/imagery) about the ease and importance of Chat, Play, Read through everyday products and services around daily routines; nudges in places parents spend time, channels they already access and media they consume.

Distribute resources and information on Chat, Play, Read through existing opportunities, e.g. commercial channels, targeted products, and professionals (e.g. school/early education, health professionals). Focus on everyday routines to reduce time costs.

Reach families through media to promote Chat, Play, Read. Use both celebrities and local champions to role model and normalise behaviours in the community. Emphasise positive, empowering messages for families.

Chat



Play



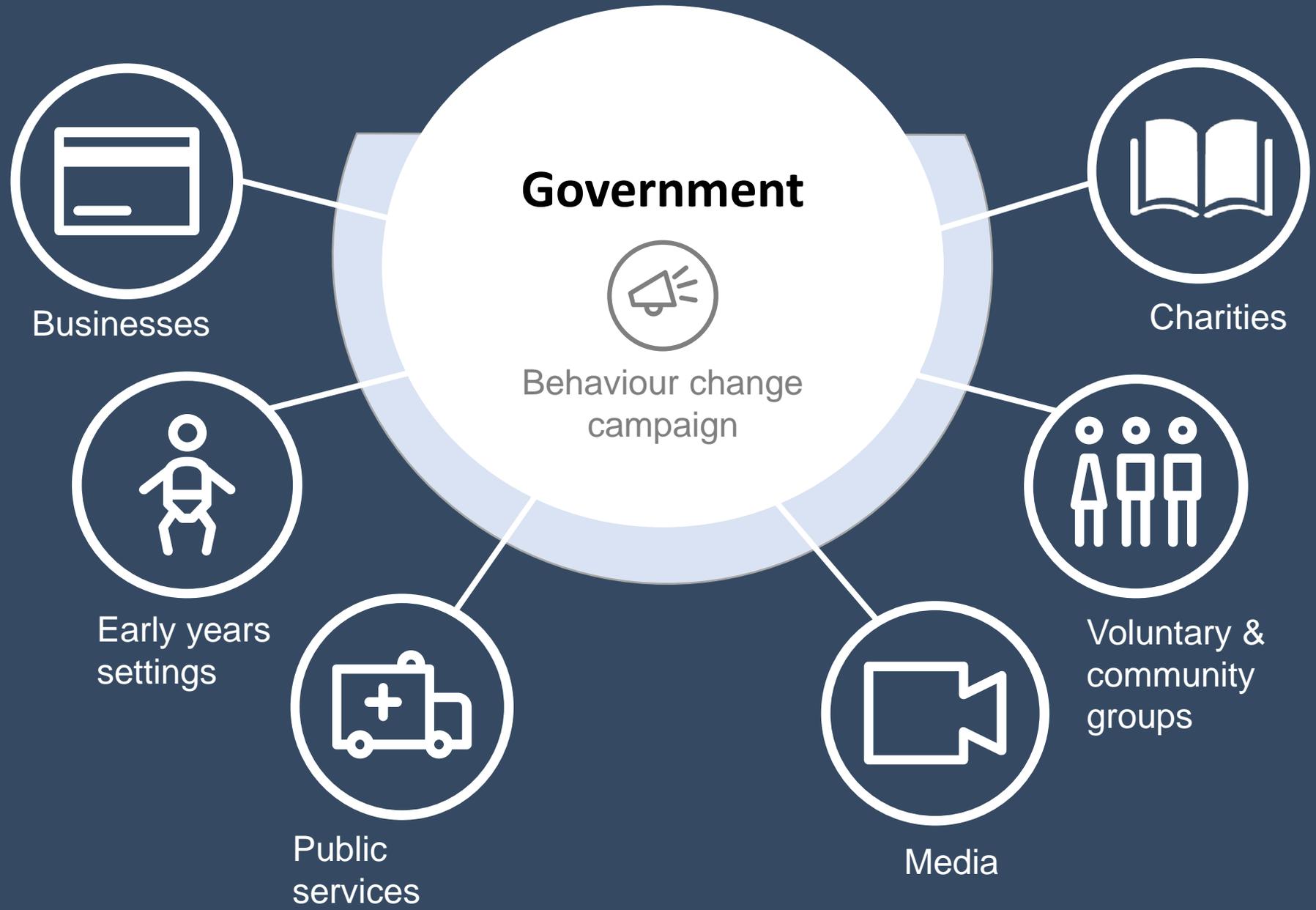
Read



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Home
learning
environment

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environment



Thank you

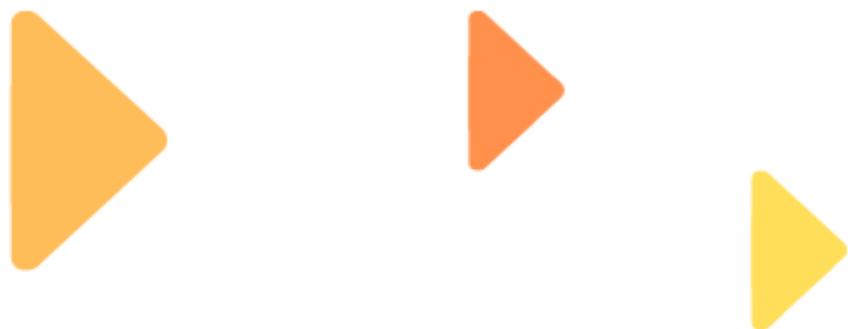


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Reflections on Sure Start and wider family policy

CAREY OPPENHEIM

Sure Start – illuminates key aspects of family policy

- ▶ Sure Start – flagship policy and public investment in the early years from birth to the start of school
- ▶ Build the capabilities of families, parents – particularly mothers – and children
- ▶ Combined universal and targeted provision
- ▶ Combined bottom up community/parent led approach

Sure Start - wider learning

- ▶ Tensions between community led and evidenced based approaches
- ▶ Takes time to embed new institutions, to test, learn & adapt – but politics is impatient
- ▶ Implementation of integrated services and evidenced based programmes can be challenging
- ▶ Not just under 5 - core elements of effective family support that straddle phases of childhood
- ▶ Importance of policies to reduce pressures on families at the same time

Since 1997 - changing landscape: family, work & poverty

- ▶ Almost 1 in 2 will experience separation/divorce of their parents on current trends
- ▶ Growth of blended families
- ▶ New inequalities e.g. postponement of parenthood in higher SEG – early parenthood in lower SEG
- ▶ Both parents working when children are under 5
- ▶ Changes in parents' roles – greater father involvement
- ▶ Shift from out of work poverty to in work poverty
- ▶ Child poverty on the rise driven by reductions in benefits/tax credits and in work poverty

Since 1997 - changing landscape: public spending & role of the state

- ▶ 1997-2008 – big public spending increases with focus on families and children & poor pensioners
- ▶ 2008 – financial crash – spending maintained, but growing debt
- ▶ 2010-2018 – austerity – big decreases in public spending, pensioners protected; families, children & working age exposed
- ▶ 2018 – some indications of moving away from austerity
- ▶ Under Labour – public policy focused on reducing pressures & increasing capabilities – child poverty target
- ▶ Under Coalition & Conservatives – public policy focused on increasing capabilities, while pressures increasing as a result of benefit cuts – shift from child poverty to social mobility

Over the period - shift to a key role for the state in family policy

- ▶ Early years and childcare core part of public policy
- ▶ Work-life balance policies
- ▶ Early intervention to support capabilities of parents, couples & children
- ▶ Targeted provision for high risk families and children (Respect, Troubled Families)
- ▶ Mental health support
- ▶ Statutory Minimum wage

What we have learnt

- ▶ Money matters in its own right - to buy goods and services that promote healthy development, but also because lack of money is a key factor in parental stress.
- ▶ Parents matter more than money. A good home learning environment has a larger impact on child outcomes than socio-economic status.
- ▶ Parents' - especially mothers' - educational background and their mental health - particularly important for how children fare.
- ▶ Relationships matter, not only parent – child – but between mothers and fathers. Good relationships between parents in intact or separated families is a protective factor for children.

Implications for future family policy

- ▶ What does family support look like in context of so many working mothers and fathers and the changes in family patterns?
- ▶ We need to:
 - ▶ ensure the quality of early years provision and childcare
 - ▶ embed practices which support the quality of the relationship between parents as well as the parent-child relationship
 - ▶ re-balance – think about fathers as well as mothers
 - ▶ prevention, early intervention, high risk: to address current & new challenges
 - ▶ ensure that income measures are given same weight as service measures

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