



# Wartime Nursery, Nursery, Neighbourhood Nursery, Children's Centre: The Changing Role of Early Years Provision

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# Research Aims

- To evaluate the transition into becoming a children centre
- To chart the historical changes in relation to early years provision





Eunice Lumsden 2007





# Background to the Study: Setting the Scene

- Every Child Matters Agenda—  
promoting better outcomes for  
children
- A children centre in every community
- 2,500 Sure Start Children Centre's  
2008
- 3,500 by 2010





# Responding to Policy

- Second World War nursery – run by Ministry of Health
- Taken over officially by the Ministry of Education on August 19<sup>th</sup> 1946



STATUTORY  
ADMISSION REGISTER





- 1971: Local Authority Nursery-2 sessions morning and afternoon -free
- 90's shift in working patterns of mothers
- Local Authority Nursery continues-free but concerns that the nursery was not meeting the needs of families





- April 2004 -Development of Neighbourhood Nursery –offering full time early years provision-paid for by parents
- 2006 Transition to become a Children’s Centre incorporating both the LA and Neighbourhood Nursery and offering extended family and community support





# Research Methods

## *Case Study*

### *Phase One*

- Staff satisfaction questionnaire
- Staff interviews

### *Phase Two*

- Staff satisfaction questionnaire
- Staff interviews
- Historical perspective





# Phase One- Findings and Discussion Positives

- Positive service development for children and families
- Differentiation between staff removed
- Continuation of provision
- Community resource
- Strong and supportive management team
- Trust in leadership



# Key Concerns

- New contracts
- No traditional school holidays
- Finances
- Support
- Health and stress issues
- Staffing





## Phase Two- Findings and Discussion Positives

- New contracts had been accepted by staff
- Less differentiation between staff
- Looking forward to all staff being on shifts rather
- Training day
- Huge support for being a children's centre
- Diversity of professionals
- Wanting to know more—cross over from nursery to the other areas of the children centre



# Concerns

- Impact of new contracts on family
- Impact on personal life
- Impact on health
- Lack of support from wider organisation
- Finance
- Staffing
- Acceptance of new workers





# Historical Comparison

## Interesting Findings





# Security

## October 26<sup>th</sup> 1946

Nursery broken  
into between  
Friday 6pm and  
8am Saturday

## 2007

Children Centre:  
locked gates to  
get on to site  
when closed and  
barriers to enter  
and leave when  
open





# Staffing: Never Enough

## Wednesday June 11th 1947

Visit from Ministry of Education-  
Superintendent stressed need for extra staff

## October 1<sup>st</sup> 1947

Written request for extra staff-agreed for new nursery helper

## 2007

Staffing still high on agenda

- Ratio of staff to children
- Covering sick leave
- Supply out of school term time





14<sup>th</sup> June 1956

“It is a very pleasurable to put on record that this is the first time since the school was opened as a Nursery School by ...Education Committee in 1946 that the school has been staffed by a fully qualified staff.”

*School Log*







# Finance: Pay Should Value Practitioners

1947

Cook handed in notice:

- Difficult conditions
- Insufficient pay

Volunteers used instead of paid staff

2007

Concerns that the new Early Years Professional is not paid the same as teachers



# Curriculum-Always Trying new Things...

16<sup>th</sup> April 1947

Started Rhythmic Scribble based on Marian Richardson's Scheme with 4 year olds

2007

New Foundation stage 0-5





# Opening Hours...Whose Needs?

## 11<sup>th</sup> March 1947

Nursery allowed to have same school holidays as schools

Mothers greatly concerned as they needed nursery provision 8am -6pm

## April 2004

Neighbourhood Nursery opened to meet needs of working parents

## September 2006

Transition to children Centre open all year round





# Children...always consistent in being different

“The noise of the bull dozer is very tiring-some of the little ones dislike it intensely, a few are wildly excited when they hear and see it in motion. Most of the children are very interested and will leave their play and watch its movements for long periods of time.”

*School Log 10<sup>th</sup> April 1948*







# Bibliography

- Children's Workforce Development Council (2006) *Developing the Early Years Workforce*. [online] Available from: [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk) [Accessed 5th January 2007].
- Department of Education and Skills. (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. London: HMSO.

