



Save Childhood Movement



Letter to the party leaders

22nd April 2014

Dear Prime Minister/ .../.../.../....,

As leaders focused on the wellbeing of children and families we are deeply concerned about the Department for Education's current consistent disregard of expert opinion and advice together with the development of early years policies that are:

- not backed by the sector
- not underpinned by global best practice and evidence and
- not in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in particular Article 3 and the 2005 Special Comment No 7 'Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood' which call for all decision-making to adopt the 'best interests of the child' principle.

With the 2015 election in mind we will be asking parents, grandparents, carers, teachers and other concerned voters to take into consideration whichever political party best demonstrates 1) a more open, transparent, inclusive and child and family focused approach to early years policymaking, 2) an approach that recognises human wellbeing and social capital as vital measures for growth that must be appropriately balanced with economic aspirations and 3) the kind of positive values that we all wish to see in a more equitable, healthy and caring society.

We believe that the enclosed Early Years Manifesto 'Putting Children First' is an excellent example of what can be achieved through more thoughtful and evidenced-based collaboration and we urge you to adopt the three core elements and eleven policy points as key elements within your own election manifestos.

We are committed to ensuring that political systems safeguard the health and wellbeing of young children as citizens with developmental rights and freedoms and, over the next year, we aim to be increasingly active as a sector in ensuring that this is seen to be the case. We are also keen to offer our combined knowledge and understanding to policymakers in order to better substantiate the evidence and to ensure that the future wellbeing and attainment of children in England is not compromised by developmentally inappropriate practice.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Ellyatt, Chief Executive, Save Childhood Movement
Wendy Scott, President, TACTYC
Melian Mansfield, Chair, Early Childhood Forum
Liz Bayram, Chief Executive, PACEY
Neil Leitch, Chief Executive, Pre-School Learning Alliance
Beatrice Merrick, Chief Executive, Early Education
Purnima Tanuku, Chief Executive, National Day Nurseries Association
June O'Sullivan, Chief Executive, London Early Years Foundation
Ben Thomas, National Officer, UNISON Education and Children's Services
Richard House, Chair, Early Childhood Action (ECA)
Marie Peacock, Chair, Mothers at Home Matter