



Daycare Trust response to the consultation on Draft Early Years Professional Standards

Daycare Trust welcomes the introduction of the Early Years Professional (EYP) role and the high level of national standards that will accompany the EYP status. We welcome the equivalence to qualified teacher status and the commitment to ensure that EYPs are qualified to NVQ Level 6. This goes some way to realising Daycare Trust's vision that 60 per cent of the future workforce should have graduate-level qualifications comparable to those of a primary school teacher, with salary and benefits to match.

However, we do envisage a number of difficult issues associated with the new standards, and before going on to discuss the requirements and standards in detail, would like to comment on a number of these.

- **Relationship with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)**

Daycare Trust is concerned that the new EYP role will not have the same credibility and status as QTS. In order for people to join, train and stay in the early years profession, there will need to be some incentive. The opportunity to train at a higher level will be one such incentive, but will not be sufficient on its own. There needs to be a commitment to increasing pay and conditions in order to attract the best people to work in childcare and early years. Currently, the average pay for childcare workers is £5.50 per hour, with senior managers earning £8.80 per hour. This compares with average hourly earnings in the UK of £9.66 for men and £8.33 for women¹. Given the choice to train for EYPS or QTS, people will continue to be attracted to the position with better pay and conditions. Increased qualifications must be accompanied by increased pay.

The development of the EYPS must not lead to a two-tier attitude in schools and early years settings, whereby the qualified teacher is seen as 'higher' than the early years professional. Without equal pay and conditions, Daycare Trust is concerned that people with EYPS will still be seen as the 'poor relation' to those with QTS. It will be important that advertising and promotion of the EYP role can match that for QTS.

- **Accessibility**

The standards and requirements must be made accessible to the full range of people who may wish to train as an EYP. This includes people from Black and Ethnic Minority groups, and disabled people. We have indicated below where the standards may not be fully accessible.

¹ According to the Labour Force Survey 2003.

- **Home-based care**

Daycare Trust is also concerned that the standards may not be appropriate for the full range of childcare providers, particularly those who work primarily on their own in home-based care settings. The emphasis on team work in S1.11, S1.12, S2 and S3 is important, but CWDC must also provide routes for lone workers to achieve higher qualifications. There needs to be further consideration of how those working in home-based care can develop professionally and achieve EYPS.

- **Focus on behaviour, literacy, numeracy and ICT**

With regard to the standards themselves as a whole, Daycare Trust is concerned that the standards should better recognise the individual nature and experience of babies and young children, seeing them as capable and confident. The focus on behaviour through the standards is inappropriate for babies and very young children, and Daycare Trust would not want standards to emphasise particular behaviour as being good or bad when talking about babies and very young children.

Daycare Trust also believes there is a too strong focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Large parts of the draft standards seem to be relevant to the end of the Foundation Stage only, rather than covering 0-5s. EYPS standards must also focus on creativity and play, particularly when working with babies and very young children.

- **Language**

Daycare Trust believes that some of the language used in the draft standards does not give sufficient focus on younger children, particularly considering that they should be written with babies and very young children in mind. We have outlined below where we think this is the case.

Part 1 – Requirements of an early years professional

Comments

- R1** This standard would ensure parity with other professionals, such as teachers and nurses. However, concern has been expressed by some childcare training providers, especially those offering Foundation Degrees, that their students may not have the equivalent of grade C in the GCSE examination. Daycare Trust acknowledges the importance of good English and maths skills, but believes that CWDC must work with all providers to ensure that people with relevant skills and competence are able to go on to achieve EYPS where appropriate. This will be particularly important for mature candidates who may need to demonstrate competence in other ways. This may also involve working with the Learning and Skills Council and DfES to further develop and/or promote the adult skills qualifications.
- R2** Daycare Trust is aware of difficulties some disabled people have had in completing the QTS skills tests due to their inaccessibility. Assuming that the EYPS skills tests will be built on the same model, it is essential that CWDC ensure their accessibility to all potential applicants to EYPS.
- R3** Daycare Trust would like further information on how this will impact people with English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic groups. Whilst we support the requirement for EYPs to have a good command of spoken and written English, community language skills will be of direct importance to providing high quality services for families from minority ethnic groups.
- Evidence from Daycare Trust's current research project into childcare for black and minority families shows that parents and carers highly value childcare settings where their community language is spoken and valued.
- R4** Daycare Trust would like to have more detailed information about what 'physically and mentally fit' means in the context of R4, and how this would be assessed and reviewed. CWDC must ensure this requirement is not at odds with disability legislation. We are aware that some disabled people have found it very hard to gain QTS because of the equivalent standard to this, despite having all the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to be a teacher. While this requirement is essential, it must not be to the detriment of disabled people wanting to join the profession. Daycare Trust recommends that the CWDC look at the detailed work done by the TDA in its 'Able to Teach' publication.
- R5** Candidates are not excluded from working with children, but 'disqualified'. A disqualification may be lifted in certain circumstances, hence the need to make the distinction clear.

R6 Daycare Trust agrees that a graduate level qualification should be the requirement for EYPS.

R7 Daycare Trust agrees with the emphasis on relevant experience. This will need further information, ie does the requirement mean two years full-time equivalent?

There has been some concern expressed by providers and education organisations that settings covering the age from birth to the end of the foundation stage are in short supply, and that it may not be possible to gain such experience. CWDC and TDA may need to work further with childcare settings to provide opportunities for relevant experience.

Part 2 – Standards for Early Years Professionals

S1 Professional responsibilities

Values

(S1.1 – S1.3)

Effective Communication and engagement

(S1.4 – S1.7)

Daycare Trust believes there should be a stronger focus on involvement of parents, rather than simply establishing relationships with them. Real and meaningful partnership working needs to be established between the EYP and parents and carers.

Frameworks

(S1.8 – S1.10)

Working with others

(S1.11 – S1.12)

As mentioned above, Daycare Trust is concerned that the focus on leading a team will exclude people working in home-based care such as childminders. There should be appropriate professional routes for all childcare and early years providers. Furthermore, leading a team is not required to achieve QTS. There should be further clarification of the leadership role of EYPS and how this interacts with QTS and NPQICL.

Improving practice

(S.113 – S1.17)

Again, the emphasis on leading a team may not be appropriate for all settings.

Accountability

(S1.18)

S2 Professional knowledge and understanding

Child development
(S2.1 – S2.4)

In S2.1 there needs to be a stronger requirement to know about different theories of child development, so that professionals are able to make informed judgements and choices about children's development. There also should be mention the need to understand how to work outside of "expected patterns of development", as would be expected at this level.

In S2.2, Daycare Trust does not like the use of the word 'progression', when used in the context of child development. 'Progression' is too often linked with achievement, which is not appropriate here. **We would suggest using 'development' in place of progression.**

S2.3 does not bring out the holistic role of early years professionals. It is important to know how to meet children's needs and where appropriate to refer on, rather than simply act as a referral service to other professionals. **Daycare Trust recommends that this standard be changed to reflect the inclusive practice and the holistic approach of the EYP role.**

Early Years Foundation Stage
(S2.5 – S2.7)

We recommend that S2.5 read 'Valuing parents and carers as their children's first and most enduring educators'.

Effective Practice
(S2.8 – S2.13)

We believe that the section on effective practice should have a greater emphasis on observing and being led by children, and using knowledge to help them develop.

The focus in this section should be on 'doing' rather than 'knowing how'. **Daycare Trust recommends that the wording in standards S2.8 – S2.13 be changed to more active language, rather than simply knowing the theory.** For example, S2.9 could read 'Engage and communicate...' and S2.11 could read 'Knowing and being able to use a range of strategies...'

Daycare Trust would question why S2.13 focuses on children and families for whom English is an additional language, rather than mentioning the full range of diverse needs which children may have. This may be because the standards have been adapted from QTS standards, on which there is a direct responsibility towards children with English as an additional language. **We believe this standard should embrace all equality issues. In particular, Daycare Trust would recommend that this standard reflect the need to provide for children with disabilities and special educational needs, as this is**

specifically mentioned in the forthcoming Childcare Act 2006.

Health and well-being
(S2.14 – S2.15)

Working with others
(S2.16)

EYPs will need to not only understand, but also respect and value the contribution that other professionals make. There should also be further emphasis on partnership working. This standard needs to be reinforced.

S3 Leading practice in the early years foundation stage

This whole section is preceded by the statement ‘Those awarded early years professional status must demonstrate that they can *lead a team* to deliver...’

The emphasis on leading a team may alienate some home-based childcare providers. This also does not recognise the collaborative approach emphasised in the Early Years Foundation Stage consultation. The focus of the EYFS is on collaborative working, enabling childcare settings to work together to deliver learning, development and care for babies and young children.

As mentioned previously in our response, and particularly as EYPS is meant to be equivalent to QTS, there should be less emphasis on leading a team, while maintaining the focus on leading practice. People working in small settings and home-based childcare professionals should also be given opportunities to lead practice and therefore achieve EYPS. This may involve working in a team, but not necessarily taking a lead role, as this will not always be possible or appropriate.

The introduction to this section should read ‘lead a team *if appropriate or if working in a group setting*’.

(S3.1 – S3.4)

Daycare Trust believes that the focus on behaviour in S3.4 will be inappropriate for EYPs working with babies and very young children. While behaviour, self-control and independence are important; there should also be a focus on happiness, enjoyment and play. The standard could read ‘EYPs should have an understanding of what motivates children and use that understanding to promote enjoyment, confidence, independence and good behaviour’.

Working with others
(S3.5 – S3.7)

S3.5 should be reinforced to promote parental/child involvement, rather than simply sharing information. It could be changed to read ‘ensuring that parents and

carers are given opportunities to be fully involved in the setting's support for their children's well-being, development and learning.

The language in S3.7 should be more inclusive. The current wording implies a focus on educational achievement suggests that children with additional needs are less likely to achieve. Children's achievements should be interpreted by professionals in the widest possible way, including all types of development. We believe that the word 'interventions' should not be used. Instead, the standard could read 'Identify and reward all children's achievements in the widest sense, using strategies to enable children with additional needs to develop and progress'.

Leading practice
(S3.8 – S3.13)

S3.11 is not appropriate for babies and young children, and focuses on children at the end of the Foundation Stage, rather than relating to all babies and children from 0-5. In addition, this standard undermines the current Foundation Stage guidance, which says that each area of learning is equally important.

Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback
(S3.14 – S3.16)

Reviewing and evaluating practice
(S3.17)