

England's early years education expansion locks out disadvantaged children and lacks focus on quality ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

New research ^[3] published today by the Sutton Trust concludes that the recent government announcement of a large-scale expansion to England's early childhood education and care system risks widening gaps in child development and worsening quality.

The research highlights major issues with England's current system that will be exacerbated by the government's planned expansion. In particular, a large proportion of the poorest children are locked out of extra early years education, rates paid by the government to providers are insufficient to cover their costs and planned changes to staff ratios and qualifications risk worsening the quality of education and care.

The report, *World Class* – by researchers at RAND Europe, examines the early years systems of a range of countries to identify the best combination of approaches for high-quality education and identify lessons for England. It highlights that the government's expansion plans treat early years solely as childcare, ignoring the substantial educational and economic benefits of high-quality universal provision.

Alongside the research, the Sutton Trust compared the cost and affordability ^[4] of early years education for low-income families in England and other countries, taking into account existing and planned government-funded provision.

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The report sets out a range of measures, drawing on best practice from around the world, for England's early years system to become an international exemplar:

Highly-qualified staff are key.

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A higher number of staff to children is essential for better quality provision.

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England should remove barriers for disadvantaged families to increase participation.

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Early years provision should include support for families.

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Related link: *World class: What England can learn from global experience to make early years policy work for disadvantaged children* ^[3]

Region: Europe ^[5]

Tags: expansion ^[6]

accessibility ^[7]

cost ^[8]

high-quality ^[9]

workforce ^[10]

disadvantaged children ^[11]

disadvantaged families ^[12]

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Links

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