

# The mixed economy of childcare and the needs of disadvantaged children <sup>[1]</sup>

Reports on ICMEC Seminar Series

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## AVAILABILITY

- [Graham Archer's presentational notes](#) <sup>[2]</sup>
- [Ivan La Valle's presentation notes](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

## Seminar briefing:

At the third seminar in the ICMEC international seminar series it was the turn of a Government representative to set the Government's approach to the mixed economy of childcare in a wider context. Graham Archer, Deputy Director Childcare at the Department for Children, Schools and Families (United Kingdom) spoke on the topic "Childcare and early years provision in a diverse market - the Government's approach."

As part of a wide-ranging presentation he focused on developments following the 2004 launch of the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare and reiterated the Government's position that "The diverse market is the only game in town", while justifying this approach by emphasising the strengths of the private for-profit and not-for profit sectors, such as their flexibility.

As this seminar paid special attention to the needs of disadvantaged children and their families, Graham Archer explained the Government's plans for widening access by means of the Affordable Childcare Campaign. This aims to increase the take-up of tax credits and influence the sector with regards to positioning childcare within the wider child poverty agenda. Ultimately, Local Authorities would have to take the lead in realising a sustainable childcare market under their 'childcare sufficiency' duty contained in the 2006 Childcare Act.

In a thoughtful response, Ivana La Valle, Co-director of the Families & Children Group at the National Centre for Social Research compared the Government's stated position with the findings from a series of recent Government commissioned studies conducted by NatCen. Her presentation addressed three questions:

- Early years education (EYE) and childcare: what has been achieved in the past decade?
- What remains to be done?
- Can Local Authorities do it?

Their findings highlight that there is a mismatch between childcare availability and the working patterns of low-paid women in particular. Distrust of tax credits had been generated by initial serious problems with their administration. Ivana addressed the needs of disadvantaged children throughout her presentation.

Issues raised in the discussion that followed the two presentations included: the social stratification reflected in the two childcare markets that have emerged for the children of employed parents as opposed to disadvantaged children the gender issues underlying the Government's encouragement of mothers into the workforce the need for continuity of experience for young children in early education and childcare, which is threatened by business closures the problems experienced by small childcare businesses in remaining sustainable the way in which the Canadian City of Ontario local authority supports and regulates the local childcare market strategies which the Child Poverty Unit, a joint DCSF/DWP initiative, intends to develop to encourage the uptake of Children's Centres Services.

The powerpoint presentations have been provided by the two speakers and can be found by following the links above.

Also, look for on the ICMEC website related link Seminar Two: Childcare Quality in the Mixed Economy of Welfare: An Economist's View that featured Gordon Cleveland with comments by Peter Moss.

**Related link:** [ICMEC seminar series website](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** Europe <sup>[5]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[6]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[7]</sup>

diversity <sup>[8]</sup>

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/08/05/mixed-economy-childcare-and-needs-disadvantaged-children>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/08/05/mixed-economy-childcare-and-needs-disadvantaged-children> [2]  
<http://www.uel.ac.uk/icmec/seminar/documents/ICMECpresentationGrahamArcherDCSF12May08.ppt> [3]  
<http://www.uel.ac.uk/icmec/seminar/documents/ICMECsem12May08.pptIvanaLaVallerespondent.ppt> [4] <http://www.uel.ac.uk/icmec/seminar/index.htm> [5]  
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