



Best Start Partnership

The Best Start for Children in Jersey

By getting it right from the start, Jersey will become an island that works for all children and makes a sound investment in the island's future.

About the Partnership

Achieving better outcomes for children and families means working across traditional boundaries between government departments and partner agencies in both the public, private, voluntary and community sectors with parents and their children. The Best Start Partnership¹ offers a new 'whole system' approach by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders in a single body. It has and will continue to draw on the voices of children and families with local representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to provide unique insights representing the interests of children in the development, implementation and evaluation of government strategy and policy.

The purpose of the Partnership is to:

- represent the interests of children in the development, implementation and evaluation of government strategy and policy
- ensure that early years and childhood policy is co-ordinated, resource allocation is effectively prioritised and high quality practice is embedded across services and organisations
- support and help implement, integrate and monitor delivery plans for relevant outcomes
- support the delivery of the children's plan
- monitor and review the impact of policies and services for children and families

Why the Early Years are crucial

What happens in pregnancy and early childhood has the greatest impact on children's futures as it impacts on physical and mental health throughout adulthood.

"The period from conception to the start of school opens a critical and singular window of opportunity to shape the development of a child's brain. At this time, brain connections form at an unrepeated speed, giving shape and depth to children's cognitive, emotional and social development – influencing their capacity to learn, to solve problems and to relate to others. This, in turn, has a significant impact on their adult lives, affecting their ability to earn a living and contribute to their societies . . . even their future happiness."²

Evidence is clear that children's early years experiences shape their development, educational attainment and life chances. Children who receive high quality early childhood education and health services from conception onwards have a positive attitude to learning when they start school, are more resilient and have better learning, development and health outcomes overall. They are more likely to complete secondary school and hold jobs. They are also less likely to rely on the welfare system and are significantly less likely to become involved in the judicial system.

The importance of parents

Parents are children's first and most important educators. Families provide children with the relationships, the opportunities and the experiences that shape their learning and development. Children who experience responsive care giving develop secure attachment bonds which provide a solid foundation on which to build emotional wellbeing. Research shows that social class, income,

¹ Previously the Early Years and Childhood Partnership (EYCP)

² Early Moments Matter for Every Child (2017), Unicef.

living conditions and parent's own education levels are directly related to child development outcomes. However, the quality of the early home learning environment acts as a significant modifying factor. All parents can enhance their child's progress if they engage regularly in activities that encourage positive social development and thinking. Children with strong early home learning environments are ahead in both social and cognitive development at the age of three³. They show advanced language ability, higher levels of confidence, co-operation and sociability, and this advantage continues as they progress through school⁴.

Promoting their skills and capacity will provide the basis for parents to better understand how children learn and ensure that they are active participants in their child's development, enabling the child to become an active learner with a strong attachment and healthy relationships.

Whilst we want the very best start for all of our children, we know that some children start their lives with reduced life chances and may lead to poorer outcomes for those children, both in the early years and throughout their lives. This may be because they are less advantaged socially and emotionally or because other risk factors are present in their families which, if unsupported, can lead to a poor start for those children.

What we already know about Early Years

1. Effective approaches within the early years will contribute strongly to promoting and upholding children's rights as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁵ (UNCRC) and those rights underpin the vision of this strategy.
2. In order for children to be given the opportunity to achieve their aspirations and become the best they can be, they need to be able to access high quality learning experiences within safe, enriched environments.
3. All young children deserve the support of the best quality provision.
4. Children who experience high quality early years provision are well placed to achieve better outcomes in school, to develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities throughout their lives.
5. On the contrary, poor provision adds no value in the long term. Provision is dependent on the commitment of well qualified staff to achieve this level of quality. 'If those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they have the potential to offer the formative experience all young children deserve' (Nutbrown, June 2012).
6. Healthy development and emotional well being impacts on learning and other aspects of the child's life now and in the future.

³ Melhuish, E. et al (2017) Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Impact Study on Early Education Use and Child Outcomes up to Age Three – Research Report

⁴ Sammons, P. et al (2015) Pre-school and early home learning effects on A-level outcomes. Effective Pre-school, Primary & Secondary Education Project (EPPSE) Research report.

⁵ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Extended to Jersey in 2014.

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

The Partnership's vision

Our vision is for Jersey to be the best place for all children to grow up

We appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of life and are aware that the quality of childhood experience has lifelong consequences. We want to provide opportunities for all children to become confident and resilient individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens and that they have safe, stable, stimulating and nurturing relationships with their parents and/or carers.

All of our children deserve to have the best start in life, growing up in an environment that nurtures their development, derives safety and security from their parents and care givers, accesses high quality early years services and encourages them to have aspirations for the future and their ability to achieve them. What children experience in their earliest years is key to their success in adulthood.

The Best Start approach is underpinned by a wealth of evidence⁶ about the factors which impair optimal health and development in early life and about the types of intervention which can promote better outcomes. For example, the WAVE report "Conception to 2 years: The Age of Opportunity"⁷ describes ways in which resources may be best used to ensure the best start for every child.

The Partnership's shared principles

- The child is at the centre of all our work
- All children have the right to grow up safely, live healthy lives, learn and achieve and be seen and heard
- Service delivery is holistic, co-ordinated and seamless, making every contact with parents and carers count from day one and getting it right first time
- The uniqueness of children and families is valued and provided for
- Children and families who need support will be identified and have access to the right help at the right time from the right service
- Listening and involving children and families in shaping and evaluating services delivers what's needed and makes effective use of available resources
- Quality is at the heart of service delivery for children and families

Making Jersey a child and family friendly island

We recognise that all parents want the best for their children and value the vital role played by parents and carers in securing the best outcomes for them in early childhood. During the early years adults have significant impact on children's health and physical development, social, emotional and personal learning and on the development of their language and communication skills.

We believe that working together with families, communities and partner agencies in an integrated way, will deliver high quality services which will meet the needs of all our children. We will always endeavour to deliver our work as a partnership with children and families as equal partners.

We are ambitious for all children and will make the experience of the child paramount. We will work as a Partnership to help key services to deliver excellence in all early years services and settings. We

⁶ <http://www.eif.org.uk>

⁷ <http://www.wavetrust.org/our-work/publications/reports/conception-age-2-age-opportunity>

will put quality at the heart of all our work as we know this will increase the chances of positive outcomes for children.

Building a Common Approach to Early Years

The Government's Common Strategy Policy and a commitment to putting children first is embodied in the Pledge to Children and Young People. The Best Start Partnership is a key asset to ensuring integration and connectivity between existing, and future, commitments and plans as its priorities support the long term outcomes identified in the ambitions of Future Jersey. By having an overarching view and understanding of the system as a whole, the Partnership will help deliver the Common Strategic Policy intentions for Early Years, as well as the proposed actions in the new Children's Plan, and through its contribution to the Policy Development Board for Early Years.

The Best Start Partnership has a focus on children, and their families, from conception to the end of the foundation stage whilst recognising both the need to provide continuing opportunities for play and child care, support across transitions and to think holistically for families who have children of different ages.

The Partnership has a key function in ensuring that investments are collectively achieving improvement. This means ensuring that outcomes are being delivered, through related metrics, and recommending where improvement is sustained and built upon.

Developing the Best Start Partnership priorities

The Partnership's priorities focus on areas in early years where it can deploy its multi-agency and child and family perspectives most effectively in providing oversight from policy through to practice to ensure continuous improvement. Typically, this will include coordination to ensure effective planning, piloting, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of a range of programmes as well as providing expert guidance via the independent chair.

Working collectively the Partnership has developed a set of priorities to help focus its efforts where they can achieve the most benefit. The development of the priorities has been informed by a range of activity including:

- The findings and proposals from an Achieving Jersey Futures report of the Early years: SEN and Inclusion task and finish group in April 2013. This group conducted a needs analysis and engaged with a wide range of services, schools and settings, seeking views of young children, parents and practitioners. An inclusion event was held to review evidence of what works and identify key challenges. Principles and proposals for delivery of a Jersey Futures approach were put forward. Developments which have subsequently occurred include the establishment of a pilot Children's Centre at Samares Pathways, the formation of an early years inclusion team and development of the Portage early education service.
- An Early Years Childhood Partnership (EYCP) Festival of Ideas in 2016 which developed the vision, principles and key areas of focus for the Partnership as it started its journey towards becoming the Best Start Partnership.

- The Early Childhood Development programme, delivered by National Children’s Bureau, with a focus on extending Making it REAL⁸ (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy), Knowledge Makes Change seminars and newsletter, mapping of early years services and the development of an Outcomes Framework for Early Childhood in Jersey using outcomes based accountability.
- An EYCP Magical event – Turning ideas into opportunities which brought together the voices of children, parents, practitioners and services to consider perspectives on what works well in Jersey, what is challenging and what priorities should be taken forward.
- A Review of Early Childhood Education in Jersey by an EYCP task and finish group.
- A series of workshops and large scale engagement event to inform the development of the Children’s Plan.
- A workshop in 2018 bringing together the work of the Early Years Childhood Partnership and National Children’s Bureau to take forward the Best Start approach.

Best Start Partnership Priorities (2019 – 2023)

A preventative approach to improving children’s outcomes is the golden thread that runs through the priorities for improvement.

The priorities are to deliver:

1. Best Start for all: Building strong foundations for children’s futures by supporting all children in Jersey to flourish.
2. Best Start Plus: Achieving equity of outcomes for all children.
3. Best Start Together: Recognising the strength of children, families and services working in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children.

A proposed work-plan is set out in the tables below which will inform how the Best Start Partnership will progress.

⁸ Making it REAL sets out to improve the way practitioners work with parents; to hand over knowledge and build confidence through meaningful early literacy activities to support the early home learning environment and ultimately improve literacy and wider outcomes for young children and their families.

Priority 1: Best Start for all: *building strong foundations for children's futures by supporting all children in Jersey to flourish*

Children's Plan Outcome	How we want to make a difference: We will evaluate our actions by how they contribute to the following indicators	The Best Start Partnership will focus on the following areas of work:	Best Start Partnership Key Link
All Children in Jersey Live Healthy Lives	<p>Increase the number of two year olds whose development is on track</p> <p>Increase the number of mothers breastfeeding after 8 weeks</p> <p>Increase the number of two and five year olds who are a healthy weight</p> <p>Reduce the number of five year olds requiring dental treatment</p>	<p>Evaluate and promote impact of Baby Steps antenatal parent education programme as part of the universal health visiting offer</p> <p>Support the planning for a pilot of an integrated developmental review at 24 – 36 months as part of the Healthy Child Programme</p> <p>Promote UNICEF Baby friendly standards</p> <p>Evaluate: - the existing Child measurement / healthy weight programme - the implementation, and impact of, HENRY training - the Healthy Start programme</p> <p>Coordinate an Early Years stakeholder's response to alternative preventative approaches to reception-aged children's dental health.</p>	<p>FNHC</p> <p>FNHC / CYPES</p> <p>Strategic Public Health</p> <p>FNHC</p> <p>Health & Community Services</p>
All Children in Jersey Grow Up Safely	Reduce the number of children presenting at A & E below the age of 5 due to preventable accidents	Build a profile of data on child accidents to keep children safe in the early years	Child Accident Prevention / CYPES

<p>All Children in Jersey Learn and Achieve</p>	<p>Increase the number of children achieving the expected level in the Early Learning Goals at end of the Foundation Stage</p> <p>Increase the take up of a funded early education offer</p>	<p>Coordinate an Early Years stakeholder’s response to proposed additional developmental check in the year before a child starting nursery</p> <p>Promote learning from the results of the Early Years Quality Framework</p> <p>Coordinate an Early Years stakeholder’s response to guidance for practitioners to share with parents to support the early home learning and nurturing environment where children thrive</p> <p>Test with families the quality of early years information available on JOD, JCCT and gov.je</p> <p>Coordinate the Early Years stakeholder’s response to support the development of a legislative framework for Early Years</p> <p>Provide expert guidance to the Early Years Policy Development Board</p>	<p>FNHC</p> <p>CYPES</p> <p>FNHC / CYPES</p> <p>CYPES</p> <p>SPPP + CYPES</p> <p>SPPP</p>
<p>All Children in Jersey Live Healthy Lives</p>	<p>Increase the proportion of safe open space in St Helier</p> <p>Increase the level of equipped play per 1,000 population in St Helier</p>	<p>Coordinate an Early Years stakeholder’s response to inform the Public Realm Strategy</p> <p>Support the development of an island wide Play Strategy</p>	<p>Growth, Housing and Environment</p>

Priority 2: Best Start Plus: *achieving equity of outcomes for all children*

Children's Plan Outcome	How we want to make a difference: We will evaluate our actions by how they contribute to the following indicators	The Best Start Partnership will focus on the following areas of work:	Best Start Partnership Key Link
All Children in Jersey Learn and Achieve	<p>Increase the number of children achieving the expected level in the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MESCH Activity 2. Increase the uptake of Triple P Activity with increased parental satisfaction and confidence levels 3. Increase the number of children receiving REAL & showing improved language and literacy 	<p>Assist in the introduction of an early help model, within Jersey's Children First, to provide an integrated offer of support/teams around the family that includes the Early Years and Child Care</p> <p>Review and improve a pathway of support to promote perinatal, infant and maternal mental health.</p> <p>Review and promote learning from 3 local evidence based programmes that currently deliver a range of parenting support, health, learning and development outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting Programme (MECSH), 2. Triple P – Parenting Programme 3. Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) 	<p>CYPES</p> <p>FNHC</p> <p>FNHC</p> <p>CYPES</p> <p>NCB + CYPES</p>

Priority 3: Best Start Together: *recognising the strength of children, families and services working in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children*

Children's Plan Outcomes	How we want to make a difference: We will evaluate our actions by how they contribute to the following indicators	The Best Start Partnership will focus on the following areas of work:	Best Start Partnership Key Link
All Children in Jersey are Valued and Involved	<p>Increase the number of early years settings demonstrating a listening culture</p> <p>Increase the number of early years settings who demonstrate accessible and inclusive practice</p> <p>Increase the number of children and parents whose views have been sought on issues important to them.</p>	<p>Work with the Children's Commissioner and Early Years providers to promote a culture of listening to, and acting on, children's voices in early years settings.</p> <p>Extract learning from implementing the Early Years Quality Framework and Jersey's Children First to deliver guidance to settings on listening to, and including, children and parents.</p>	<p>CYPES + Children's Commissioner Office</p> <p>CYPES</p>
All Children in Jersey Live Healthy Lives	<p>Increase the number of children and families who report they have a good quality of life</p>	<p>Work with partners to continue to deliver regular opportunities for multi-agency learning events that promote innovation and best practice across Early Years</p> <p>Assist the development of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to have a family focus</p> <p>Provide a resource for the policy development process in government through offering advice/guidance and access to young children and parents' voices</p>	<p>All Best Start partners</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p>

Best Start Partnership membership:

Dr Cathy Hamer, Independent Chair

Alice Bennion, Parent

Louisa Lempriere, Parent

Children, Young People, Education and Skills Dept

Comité des Connétables representative

Family Nursing and Home Care

Health and Community Services department

Jersey Child Care Trust

Jersey Early Years Association

Primary Headteacher representative

Strategic Policy, Performance and Population department