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Childminders

During the Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016 term, Family Action carried out a short research project to find out about: childminders' experiences of supporting children with SEND; their awareness of the new legislation allowing them to operate from non-domestic premises for part of their working week; how they currently work with schools; barriers facing childminders in working more closely with schools, and how they can overcome these challenges.



Survey for childminders

A survey sent out to childminders across England revealed that:

- many childminders had cared for children with SEND (eg autism)
- there is patchy awareness among childminders of the new legislation (www.gov.uk/government/news/childcare-re-measures-small-business-enterprise-employment-act)
- childminders typically pick up and drop off children at local schools
- childminders see a number of potential barriers in working more closely with schools, such as suitable facilities (eg areas for babies to sleep, change nappies, bottle preparation) and practical issues (eg insurance).

Survey for parents/carers

In a separate survey for parents/carers, respondents commented that the new legislation could have a range of benefits, for instance: childminders can share experiences and feel less isolated; parents will know their children are engaging in a wider range of activities; children can develop their social skills by mixing with other children.

The survey also revealed that, so long as their children were safe, parents would generally be happy for their childminder to work on non-domestic premises for part of the week.

Briefing sessions

Noel Quinn (Childminding Support provider for Devon County Council) hosted briefing sessions in Devon in partnership with Family Action to explore how the new legislation can help childminders to develop their business.

A number of benefits to working in partnership with other childminders were identified (e.g. co-operative of childminders working out of a school), such as:

- being able to provide more childcare for the local community
- offering much needed back-up staffing/cover (e.g. in case of illness)
- being able to provide specific activities (e.g. music, art, sport) within a larger group, particularly for older children.

Resources

- Family Action has collated questions posed by the childminders and sent to the DfE. These will be developed into FAQs on our website in due course.
- There are case studies of childminders offering inclusive practices for children with SEND in the 'Learn from Others' section of the Learning Exchange: www.learning-exchange.org.uk
- Our Facebook page links to recent reports, publications and organisations: www.facebook.com/Learning-Exchange-904749822892733/ Links include, for instance:
 - A summary of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015: www.gov.uk/government/news/childcare-measures-small-business-enterprise-employment-act
 - EYFS: EY childminders will still be required to follow the EYFS while operating on non-domestic premises: www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework-2
 - Ofsted: childcare providers wishing to operate from additional premises will be required to gain approval from Ofsted or their childminder agency first: www.ofsted.gov.uk

- Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): a 2015 study of the quality of childminder provision in England: www.gov.uk/government/publications/study-of-early-education-and-development-childminder-provision
- PACEY: Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years: www.pacey.org.uk

Further information

- Family Action is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to support school-based childcare providers with developing high-quality and inclusive childcare for 0-5s with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Find out more about the project, and download a wide range of free resources from: www.learning-exchange.org.uk
- Our Learning Exchange Facebook page gives links to events, suppliers, equipment, training and venues that might be of interest to school-based childcare providers: www.facebook.com/pages/Learning-Exchange/904749822892733?sk=timeline

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