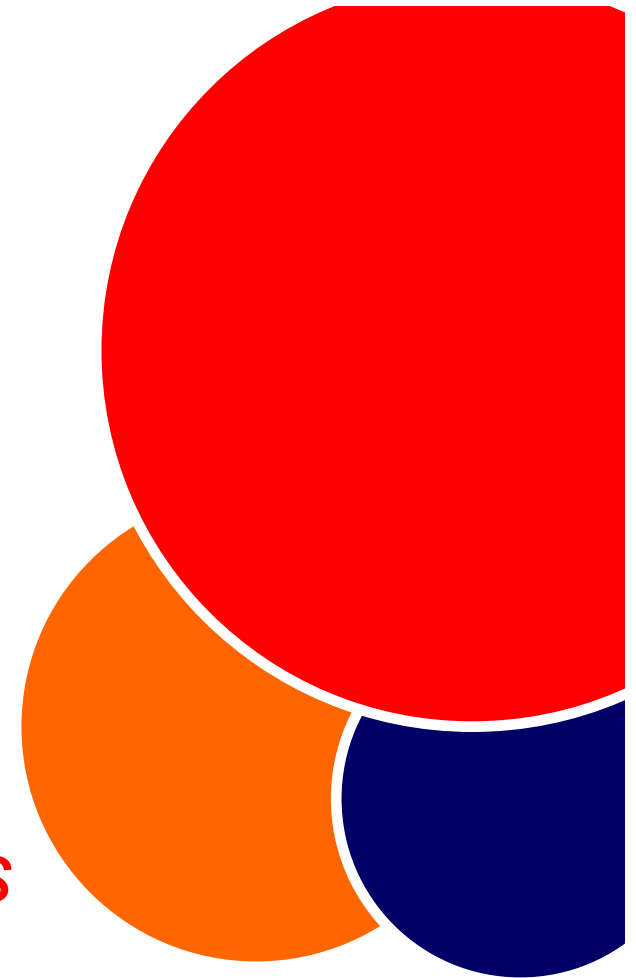


C4EO

for the sector
from the sector

Connecting children,
families and services

*Evidence from 3 early years
knowledge reviews*



social care
institute for excellence





for the sector
from the sector

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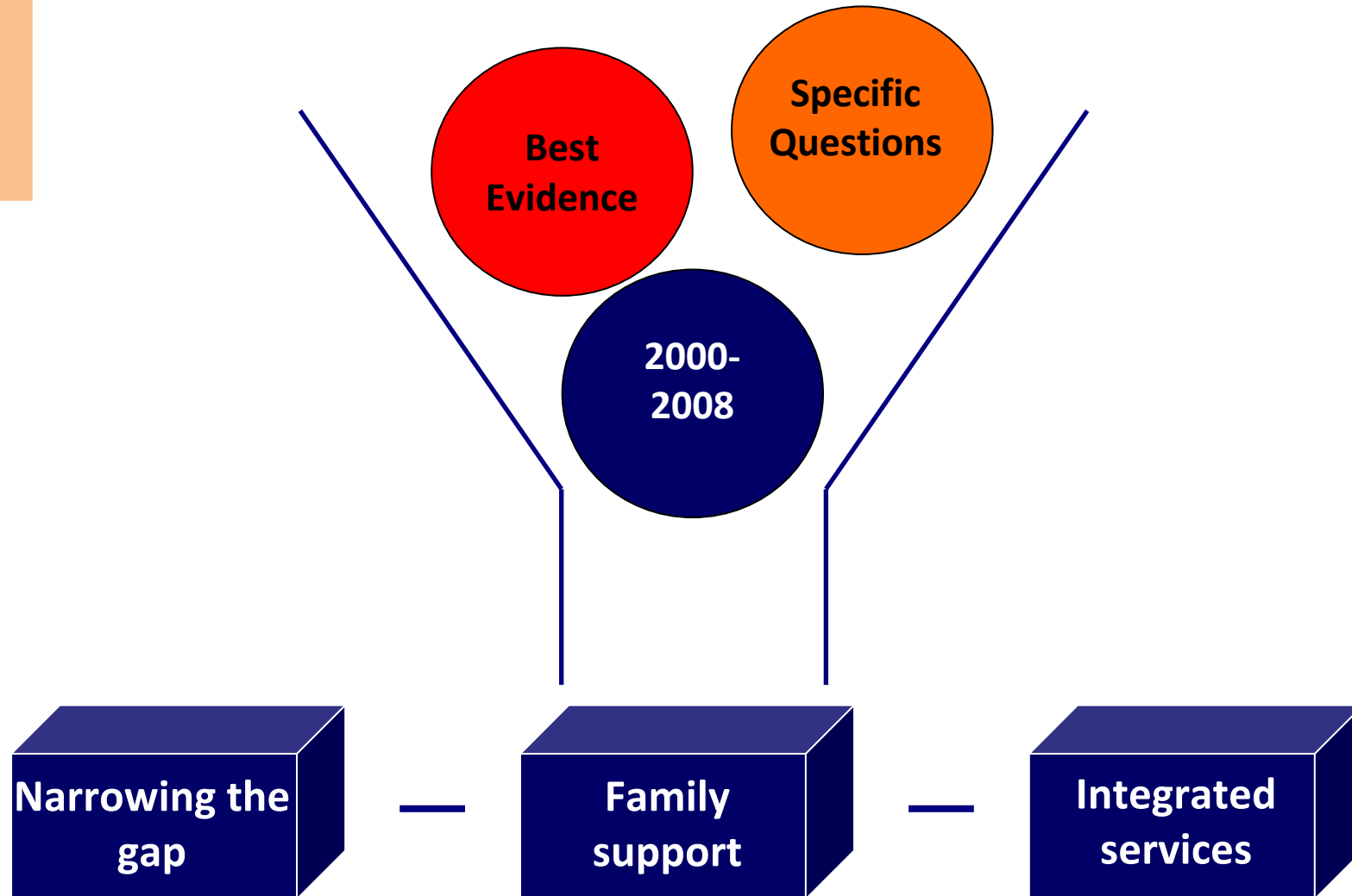


About this presentation

1. The 3 knowledge reviews
2. Risks and resilience factors
3. Identity and diversity
4. Getting, keeping and engaging families
5. Integrated services
6. What works findings

1

What is this based on?



Every Child Matters

The Early Years Foundation Stage will provide a level playing field so all children start school with an equal chance of doing well

Ed Balls, September 2008

Every child ready for success in school with at least 90% developing well across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile by age 5

Children's Plan 2020 Goals

How can we make this a reality?

- Identify risks and resilience factors
- Use effective interventions
- Use multiple approaches
- Work with families and service providers

2

Risks to young children's health and safety

- Poverty
- Low birth weight
- Smoking
- Disease and infection
- Injury, neglect, abuse
- Poor environment



Risks to young children's achievement and positive behaviour



- Poverty
- Poor bonding and attachment
- Care-giver anxiety and depression
- Lack of stimulation
- Inconsistent parenting
- Lack of aspiration

Resilience factors for children's development (1)

- Pre-natal care
- Childhood immunisations, breastfeeding, good diet
- Family employment
- High parental aspirations for their child



Resilience factors for children's development (2)

- A mother's education (particularly degree-level)
- A high quality early Home Learning Environment (HLE)
- Attending a higher quality pre-school



The Early Home Learning Environment

Parents doing simple learning activities with young girls and boys, such as:

- Reading to their child
- Taking them to the library
- Teaching them the alphabet
- Teaching them songs, poems and nursery rhymes
- Children drawing or painting
- Playing with letters and numbers
- Playing with friends outside their home



Highly effective pre-schools (1)

- Emphasise education as well as childcare
- Focus on the needs of particular individuals/groups
- Have a broad and balanced curriculum
- Enable children to spend two-thirds of their time in child-initiated activities
- Staff extend learning through sustained shared thinking



Highly effective pre-schools (2)

- Support parents to provide a positive early home learning environment
- Have strong leadership – emphasising learning and community understanding.
- Have higher staff qualifications, low turnover, and good professional development.

Children from poor backgrounds do better in pre-schools with a good social mix.



3

Identity and diversity (1)

Challenges for children

- Transition to pre-school and school
- Communication between staff and child/family
- Adopting multiple identities

Impacts can include

- Marginalisation and isolation
- Communication difficulties
- Behaviour problems



Identity and diversity (2)

Effective approaches

- Cultural sensitivity and celebrating similarity and differences
- Careful assessment and tailoring to meet individual needs
- Helping children with EAL
- Bilingual staff and language support



4

Engaging families

Address barriers to childcare for low income and/or BME parents, including:

- lack of time
- distance
- opening hours/days
- other priorities
- appeal



Engaging family members

Encourage fathers' involvement in early child care and education through:

- specific outreach/materials addressed to fathers, 'male' environments, male coordinators
- suggesting computer materials, customised reading lists and 'hands on' activities for fathers and children
- audio and video for non-resident fathers

Encourage involvement of other family members

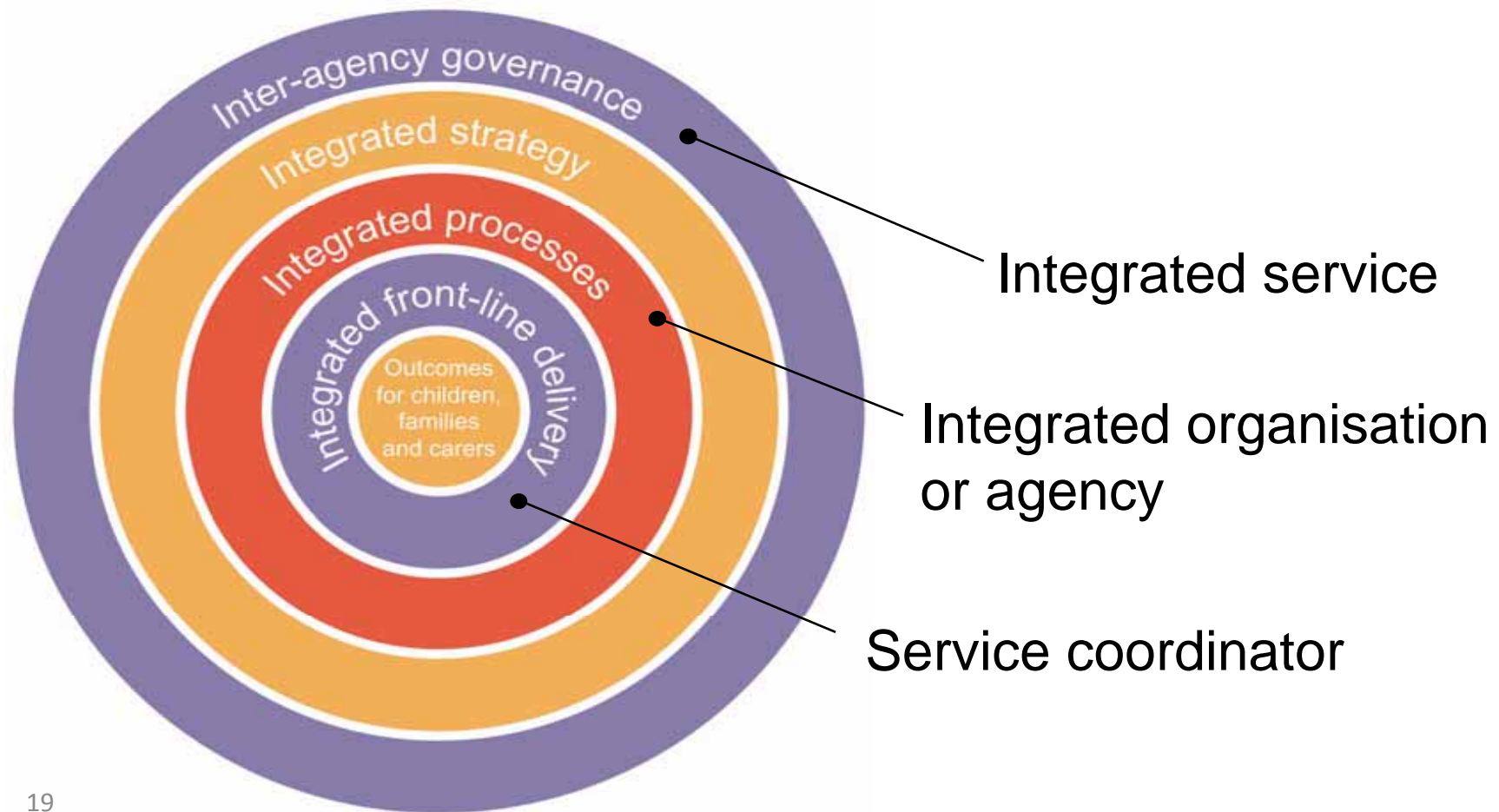


5

Integrated services for young children

The evidence is less strong for the impact on children's outcomes, but there are some helpful findings.

Integrated services for young children: 3 levels of integration



Every early childhood practitioner

May be called upon to act as a
service coordinator

- Lead professional
- Key worker (not the same as a 'key person')



Every organisation and agency

Effective interventions include:

- Programmes targeting two or more child/family outcomes (e.g. behaviour and literacy)
- Home visiting which is well focused and appropriate
- Engaging parents and other family members



Promising approaches for integrated services

- Early identification and targeting of children at risk
- Ensure stakeholder participation in service delivery and planning
- Management and leadership training
- Training for integrated understanding and multi-agency teamwork
- Further training for childminders



Integrated services: stakeholder views

Staff identify the need for:

- Common working and pay structures in multi-agency teams
- Staffing levels to match caseload demands
- Continued funding for service integration



Integrated thinking

Services need to develop:

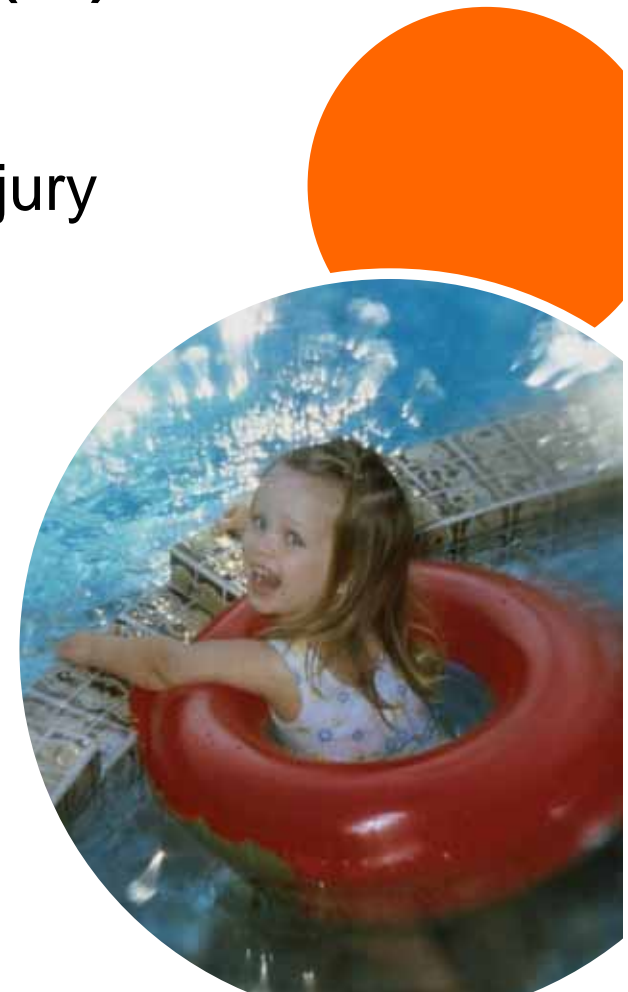
- Shared philosophy and vision
- Effective communication systems
- Clear staff review and supervision system
- Shared understanding of roles

*It's the quality of the service,
not the type of integration that matters*

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Direct ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes (1)

- Reduce incidence of low birth weight; foetal and post-natal injury
- Ensure preventive health care (e.g. immunisations and diet)
- Lower the risk of poor bonding and attachment
- Reduce child neglect and abuse



Direct ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes (2)

- Improve the quality of the early HLE
- Provide high quality pre-school and encourage attendance
- Language and literacy interventions
- Child protection
- Parenting education



Indirect ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes (1)

- Reduce childhood poverty (improve employment opportunities)
- Reduce teenage pregnancy
- Reduce maternal anxiety and depression
- Improve maternal education
- Encourage a good social mix in pre-schools



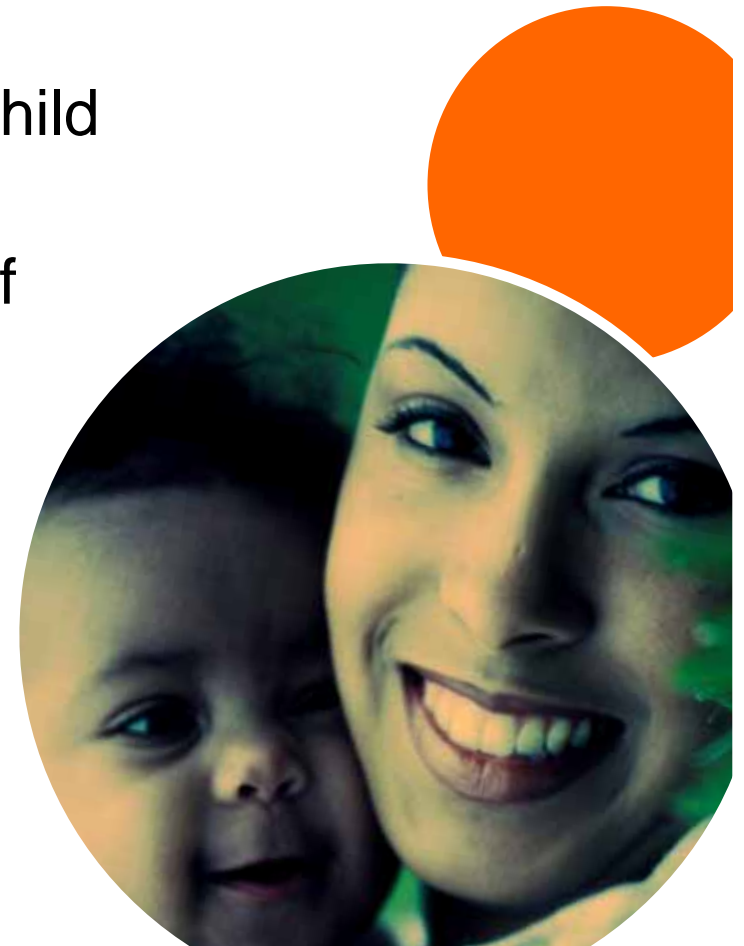
Indirect ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes (2)

- Promote parents' involvement and interest in education
- Work with parents to improve the early HLE
- Encourage fathers and wider family members to be involved
- Support parents of children with behaviour problems



Recommended practice for early childhood services

- Collect data on poverty, other risk factors and outcomes
- Combine approaches for both the child and the family
- Focus on the quality and duration of interventions
- Invest in training, leadership and service coordination



For further information...

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