

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2001

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on the progress of the Early Intervention Programme within the Department of Educational and Social Services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Early Intervention is a national initiative, aimed at raising standards of literacy and numeracy in the early years of primary school. The Initiative was funded initially for a 3 year period by Scottish Office Education and Industry Department with contributions from East Ayrshire Council during this period. This initiative has now been extended by the Scottish Executive Education Department and is funded fully until March 2002 through the Excellence Fund for Schools.
- 2.2 Quantitative and qualitative evidence has been gathered to provide information of the success of Early Intervention in East Ayrshire. Sources for such evidence are national test results, data from early identification procedures at P1 (i.e. Nursery to Primary Transition Record), as well as demonstrable evidence of change since the beginning of the Early Intervention Initiative.

3. UPDATE OF PROGRESS

3.1 Established Initiatives and Outcomes

- 3.1.1 All pre-school and primary establishments have been active in their implementation of East Ayrshire Early Intervention strategies. These strategies include:
- the implementation of the 'Profile of Skills Children 3 to 5' in local authority and private & voluntary establishments who are in partnership with East Ayrshire
 - the translation of the 'Profile of Skills Children 3 to 5' into various languages to meet the needs of minority groups
 - analysis of the data from the Nursery to Primary Transition Record to establish educationally 'at risk' indicators for schools
 - early literacy and numeracy initiatives in all pre-school and primary establishments.

3.1.2 A successful programme of staff development in early literacy and numeracy has been provided for all staff in pre-school establishments and primaries 1, 2 and 3.

3.1.3 A broad range of resources, including computer software, to support staff development and Early Intervention initiatives has been distributed to all participating establishments.

3.2 SUCCESS INDICATORS

3.2.1 It is suggested that authorities “need to provide clear evidence that the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged areas has improved at the early stages of primary school” (HM Inspectors of Education). National test results in East Ayrshire have shown an increasing trend in reading, writing and mathematics attainment in P2 and P3 between sessions 1998/99 and 2000/01. The following tables illustrate substantial improvements for the authority as a whole (and particularly for schools servicing socially disadvantaged areas).

Figure 1. Percentage of P2 Children Attaining Level A or Above

SESSION	SUBJECT					
	Reading		Writing		Maths	
	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools*</i>	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools</i>	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools</i>
1998-1999	27.3	19.8	13.1	10.82	48.6	44.67
1999-2000	33.6	24.6	14.9	19.04	56.9	39.25
2000-2001	45.2	36	22.2	24.2	68.2	60.1

* These were identified as those schools with the highest percentage of children receiving food/clothing grants and free-school meals.

Figure 2. Percentage of P3 children Not Yet Tested

SESSION	SUBJECT					
	Reading		Writing		Maths	
	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools</i>	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools</i>	All Schools	<i>Socially Disadvantaged Schools</i>
1998-1999	20	25.8	35.3	52.2	7.3	10.3
1999-2000	16.9	23	24.9	36.2	7.2	10.3
2000-2001	13	21.4	19.2	25.4	4.9	8.6

Overall, the tables show:

- In reading there has been an increase of almost 20% in the number of children in P2 attaining level A. Since 1998/99 there has been a 7% increase in the number of P3 children attaining level A or B in reading.
- There has been an increase in attainment in Maths by 20% in P2 and a steady increase in P3 (now less than 10% not attaining level A or B).

- A percentage increase in attainment of 9% in writing at P2. The percentage of children attaining level A or B in writing at P3 since 1998/99 has almost doubled.

3.2.2 Comparisons between data collected from the Nursery to Primary Transition Record in sessions 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 show that:

- the scores for literacy items in session 2000/2001 is significantly higher than in 1999/2000
- while boys are still entering P1 with less literacy skills than girls, the gap has been narrowed substantially since the start of the Early Intervention Initiative.

3.2.3 Members of the Early Intervention team have identified areas of authority-wide success (see appendix 1). The principal changes in classroom structure, methodology and resourcing, which are thought to have contributed to improvements, include:

- the network support team working in early stages (P1-P3 throughout East Ayrshire)
- an increase in the rate and pace of the introduction of single sounds and phonological awareness at early stages
- an increased use of non-fiction materials and Big Books in all establishments
- implementation of Mental Maths strategies, involving interactive teaching, in all schools
- a general increase in in-service training, including P1-P3 staff, nursery staff, classroom assistants, class-size reduction teachers and the Network Support Team.

3.2.4 In November 2000, a survey was carried out to gauge opinions from parents and heads of pre-5 and primary establishments about the nursery to primary transition process (detailed in Element 2 of the Early Intervention Action Plan). The results showed that many of the recommendations in the authority guidelines on nursery to primary transition have been employed by schools and pre-5 establishments, and that the majority of parents are satisfied with their child's transition from nursery to primary.

3.2.5 The Early Intervention Initiative has been extremely successful in involving an increased number of parents in supporting early learning in East Ayrshire. During session 1999/2000 a total of 1938 parents were involved in various projects, workshops and meetings relating to Early Intervention initiatives, such as Story Bags, Paired Reading and Paired Maths. This is an increase of 300% on the total for the previous session. In session 2000/01 the number of parents involved in supporting early learning had increased to 2005.

3.2.6 Children continue to be asked their opinions on the books or games used in Early Intervention projects. This has allowed identification and ongoing use of the most popular and successful resources.

3.3 ONGOING INITIATIVES

3.3.1 The following Early Intervention Initiatives are currently being developed:

- a series of handbooks of good practice for use by staff in pre-school and early stages primary
- systems, policies and practices to optimise continuity and tracking of pupils in primary schools
- training materials (including support videos) for use by staff in pre-school, local authority and partner provider and primary establishments.

3.3.2 Resources to support specific parental projects such as Curiosity Kits have been distributed to all schools and substantial amounts of non-fiction resources are being provided.

3.3.3 The Early Intervention Initiative has developed a focus for establishing storytelling within communities, drawing on local skills and resources and using a variety of techniques. Collaboration with Library Services is under way, and current East Ayrshire resources are being utilised.

3.3.4 The support structure of the Early Intervention team has been adjusted to reflect a shift of emphasis to supporting specific classroom organisation and methodology from primaries 1 to 3. This has involved the Early Intervention team being involved in increased direct interactive teaching initiatives within schools. Support Officers will continue to introduce and model new teaching techniques and will support staff in the implementation of these techniques.

4. FUTURE PROPOSALS

4.1 The rolling program of staff development will continue to consolidate knowledge of new staff, and to progress Early Intervention strategies into primary three and beyond. Similarly, resources will be identified to support the extension of Early Intervention in literacy and numeracy within these stages.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All financial requirements will be met with the existing Early Intervention budget.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Elected Members:

- (i) invite the Director to continue to monitor progress of the Early Intervention Programme and report back in due course; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

HMacG/MTC
24 August 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Education (Community) Sub-Committee - 6 May 1997:
Early Identification and Intervention.
2. Report to Education Committee - 28 August 1997:
Early Identification and Intervention.
3. Report to Education Committee – 16 April 1998:
Early Identification and Intervention.
4. Report to Education Committee - 3 June 1999:
Early Identification and Intervention.
5. Report to Education Committee – 14 November 2000:
Early Identification and Intervention.

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563 576118); Hilary MacGillivray, Early Intervention Co-ordinator; Muriel Reid or Grace Scott, Quality Development Officers Tel: (01563) 555650 or Jean Kerr, Psychological Service Tel: (01563) 555640.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT, HEAD OF SCHOOLS

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF DEMONSTRABLE EVIDENCE OF E.I. SUCCESS

Authority-Wide Evidence of E.I. Success *(i.e. evident in all schools / nurseries)*

- More critical approach to resourcing.
- Self audits – improved method of reviewing practice.
- More teachers in nursery.
- E.I. team available in an advisory capacity to Senior Management Teams in schools.
- Use of Skills Profile and Nursery to Primary Transition Record.
- Use of Individual Education Plans (IEP) from primary one.
- Use of transition guidelines on induction process.
- Schools have a named person with an E.I. remit.
- Improving pre-school / primary links.
- Use of writing tables in nursery.
- Introduction of single sounds – improved rate and pace.
- Print (words and phrases) appears in all nurseries.
- Schools and the E.I. team have a collaborative ethos.
- Schools and the E.I. team use a shared Action Plan.
- Most of the initial E.I. projects (e.g. Paired Reading, Story Bags) are part of school / nursery practice.
- Increased use of non-fiction (early stages).
- Use of nursery rhymes in nurseries (and extending into primary school) to increase phonological awareness.
- Increased use of phonics resources to improve phonological awareness.
- Increased spending on early stages resources.
- Use of magnetic letters and wedges as part of literacy programme.
- Use of resources for mental maths as part of numeracy programme.
- Increase in amount of parents who use (and in some cases make) resources.
- Increase in parental involvement in child's learning.
- Parents have an increased knowledge of the curriculum.
- Increase in availability of in-service training relating to early intervention.
- Whole school training for some early intervention initiatives (e.g. Mental Maths).

Widespread Evidence of E.I. Success *(i.e. evident in many schools / nurseries)*

- Network Support Team in early stages.
- Primary one staff using Transition Record information proactively.
- Mental Maths initiatives taking place.
- Introduction of the Early Years Language Development Pack.
- Use of Big Books as part of literacy programme.
- Improved classroom organisation.

AGENDA
