



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Improving school readiness Creating a better start for London

Contents

Aims	3
What is school readiness?	4
The importance of school readiness	5
What school ready children look like	6
Why invest in school readiness?	7
Inequalities in school readiness	9
Indicators of school readiness in London	10
School readiness in London	11
Trends in school readiness in London	13
What works to improve school readiness?	15
Useful resources	21
Acknowledgments	22
Picture credits	23

Aims



The purpose of this report is to:

- describe the importance of school readiness
- describe the economic case for investing in school readiness
- provide a descriptive analysis of school readiness in London
- summarise the evidence of what works to improve school readiness in order to facilitate improvements in service planning and delivery

What is school readiness?

School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally. The good level of development (GLD) is used to assess school readiness. Children are defined as having reached a GLD at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage if they achieved at least the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy

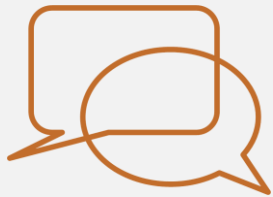
Area of learning	Early learning goal
Communication and language	Listening and attention; Understanding; Speaking
Physical development	Moving and handling; Health and self-care
Personal, social and emotional development	Self-confidence and self-awareness; Managing feelings and behaviour; Making relationships
Literacy	Reading; Writing
Mathematics	Numbers; Shape, space and measures
Understanding the world	People and communities; The world; Technology
Expressive arts, designing and making	Exploring and using media and materials; Being imaginative

The importance of school readiness

School readiness starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and life

School readiness at age five has a strong impact on future educational attainment and life chances

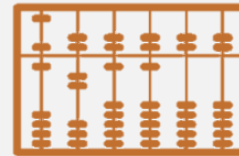
Children who don't achieve a good level of development aged 5 years struggle with:



Social skills



Reading

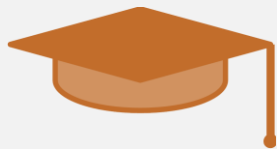


Maths



Physical skills

which impacts on outcomes in childhood and later life:



Educational outcomes



Crime



Health



Death

What school-ready children look like

Recognise numbers and quantities in the everyday environment

Participate in music activities such as singing

Have good oral health

Are able to take turns, sit, listen and play

Are able to communicate their needs and have a good vocabulary

Are able to socialise with peers and form friendships

Are independent in eating

Develop motor control and balance for a range of physical activities

Are independent in getting dressed and going to the toilet



Have received all childhood immunisations

Are well nourished and within normal weight for height

Why invest in school readiness?

Failing to invest sufficiently in quality early care and education short changes taxpayers because the return on investment is greater than many other economic development options



Every **£1** invested in quality early care and education **saves** taxpayers up to **£13** in future costs



For every **£1** spent on early years education, **£7** has to be spent to have the same impact in adolescence



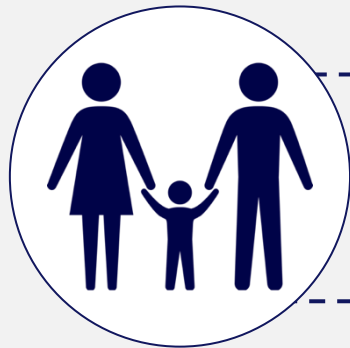
The benefits associated with the introduction of the literacy hour in the UK outstrip the costs by a ratio of between **27:1** and **70:1**



Targeted parenting programmes to prevent conduct disorders pay back **£8** over six years for every **£1** invested with savings to the NHS, education and criminal justice system

Why invest in school readiness?

Early years interventions have been shown to have a higher rate of return per investment than later interventions. The costs of delivery per child are outweighed by the benefits to the individual, taxpayers and others through improved educational outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, reduced crime and increased taxes paid due to increased earnings as adults



Curiosity corner

Cost
£78

Benefit
£5,466

Benefit to cost ratio
70.08

Family nurse partnership

Cost
£7,562

Benefit
£14,694

Benefit to cost ratio
1.94

Early childhood education

Cost
£6,141

Benefit
£11,525

Benefit to cost ratio
1.88

Perry preschool programme

Cost
£13,393

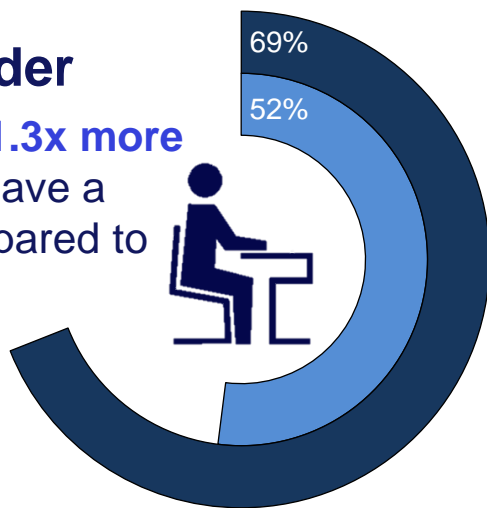
Benefit
£21,598

Benefit to cost ratio
1.61

Inequalities in school readiness (2013/14)

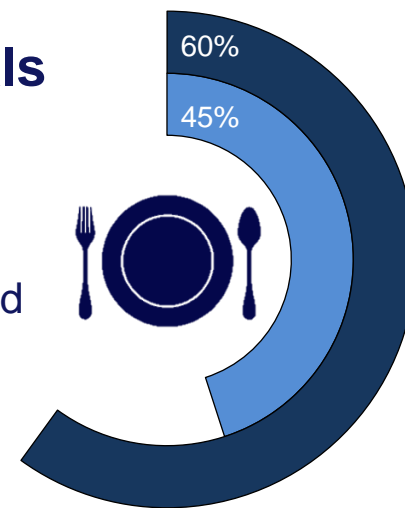
Gender

Girls are **1.3x more likely** to have a GLD compared to boys



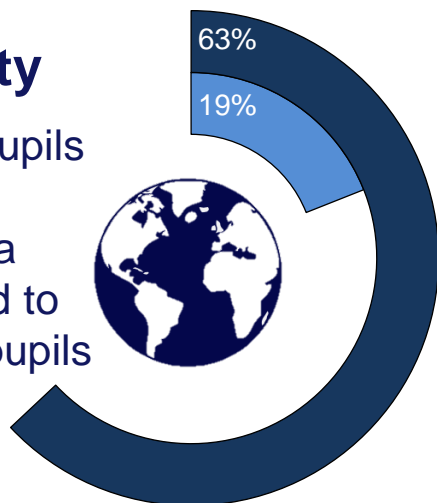
Free school meals

Pupils who are not eligible for FSM are **1.3x more likely** to have a GLD compared to those who are eligible for FSM



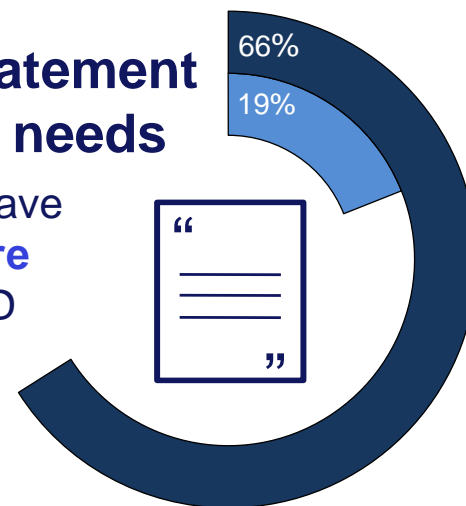
Ethnicity

White British pupils are **3.3x more likely** to have a GLD compared to Gypsy/Roma pupils



Pupils with a statement of educational needs

Pupils who do not have a SEN are **3.5x more likely** to have a GLD compared to those who have a SEN



Indicators of school readiness in London

Ready families + Ready children + Ready communities + Ready services
= Children ready for school success

Ready families

Ready children

Ready communities

Ready services

Family homelessness per 1,000 households (2012/13)



1.7



3.6

Eligible pupils in nurseries and primary schools claiming FSM (2014)



16.5%



19.9%

Children living in poverty (2012)



19.2%



23.7%

3 and 4 year-olds benefitting from funded early education (2014)



97%



92%

Under 18 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years (2013)



24.3



21.8

Low birth weight of term babies (2012)



2.8%



3.1%

Overcrowding from 2005/06 – 2007/08



2.7%



6.8%

MMR for 1 dose at 2 years (2013/14)



92.7%



87.5%

School readiness in London in 2013/14

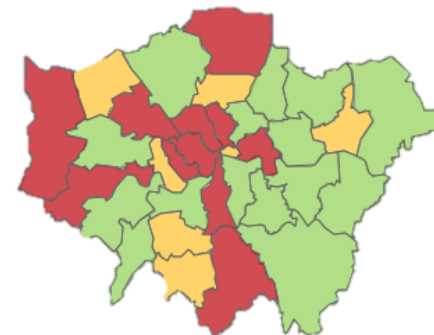
In 2013/14, **39,500** five year-olds living in London **did not** achieve a good level of development aged five years, that's about **2 in 5** children

There is a wide variation in the proportion of children who are school ready across London

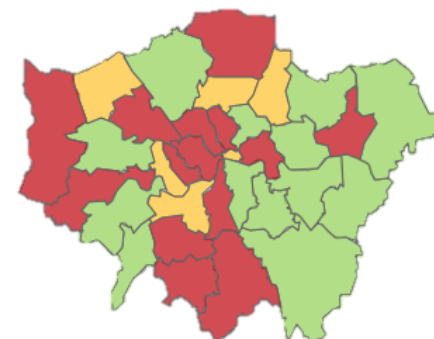
In **Hillingdon** about **1 in 2** children are school ready compared to **Lewisham** where about **3 in 4** children are school ready

England	60.4	
London region	62.2	
Lewisham	75.3	
Greenwich	73.2	
Bexley	72.9	
City of London	67.3	
Bromley	67.2	
Southwark	65.6	
Havering	65.5	
Barnet	65.4	
Newham	65.1	
Kingston upon Thames	64.9	
Hackney	64.9	
Richmond upon Thames	64.2	
Ealing	63.9	
Redbridge	63.8	
Wandsworth	63.7	
Waltham Forest	63.0	
Harrow	61.3	
Haringey	61.3	
Hammersmith and Fulham	60.8	
Merton	59.9	
Sutton	59.6	
Barking and Dagenham	59.6	
Hounslow	58.3	
Westminster	57.9	
Islington	57.8	
Brent	57.7	
Enfield	57.5	
Kensington and Chelsea	56.7	
Croydon	56.5	
Lambeth	55.9	
Camden	55.8	
Tower Hamlets	55.0	
Hillingdon	52.5	

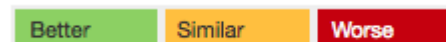
Compared to England



Compared to London



Compared to benchmark



School readiness in London in 2013/14

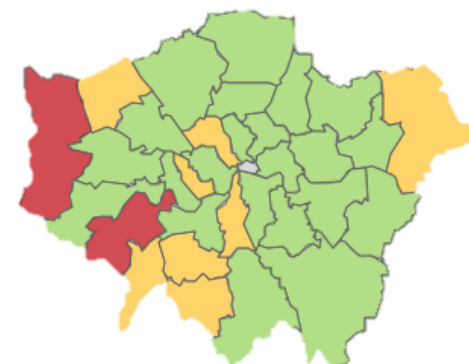
In 2013/14, **10,052** of 21,085 five year-olds receiving free school meals (FSM) living in London **did not** achieve a good level of development aged five years, that's about **1 in 2** children

There is a wide variation in the proportion of children receiving FSM who are school ready across London

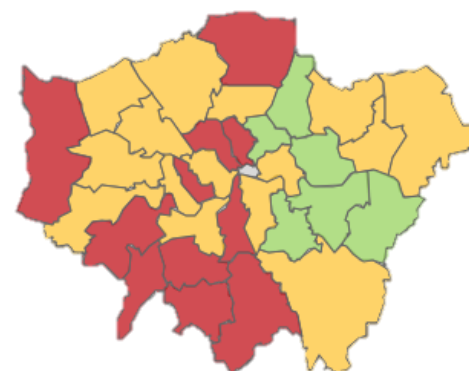
In **Richmond upon Thames** just over **1 in 3** children are school ready compared to **Lewisham** where just under **7 in 10** children are school ready

England	44.8	
London region	52.3	
Lewisham	68.1	
Greenwich	64.9	
Bexley	61.9	
Hackney	60.7	
Newham	59.9	
Waltham Forest	57.6	
Ealing	55.0	
Southwark	55.0	
Barking and Dagenham	53.4	
Barnet	53.4	
Wandsworth	52.5	
Westminster	52.3	
Haringey	52.2	
Bromley	51.0	
Hammersmith and Fulham	50.7	
Tower Hamlets	50.7	
Brent	50.7	
Redbridge	50.1	
Hounslow	49.1	
Enfield	49.1	
Havering	49.0	
Islington	48.7	
Harrow	47.9	
Croydon	47.7	
Lambeth	46.7	
Merton	44.4	
Kingston upon Thames	43.9	
Kensington and Chelsea	43.7	
Camden	43.0	
Sutton	40.4	
Hillingdon	39.4	
Richmond upon Thames	36.1	
City of London	*	

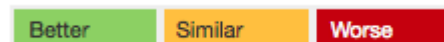
Compared to England



Compared to London



Compared to benchmark

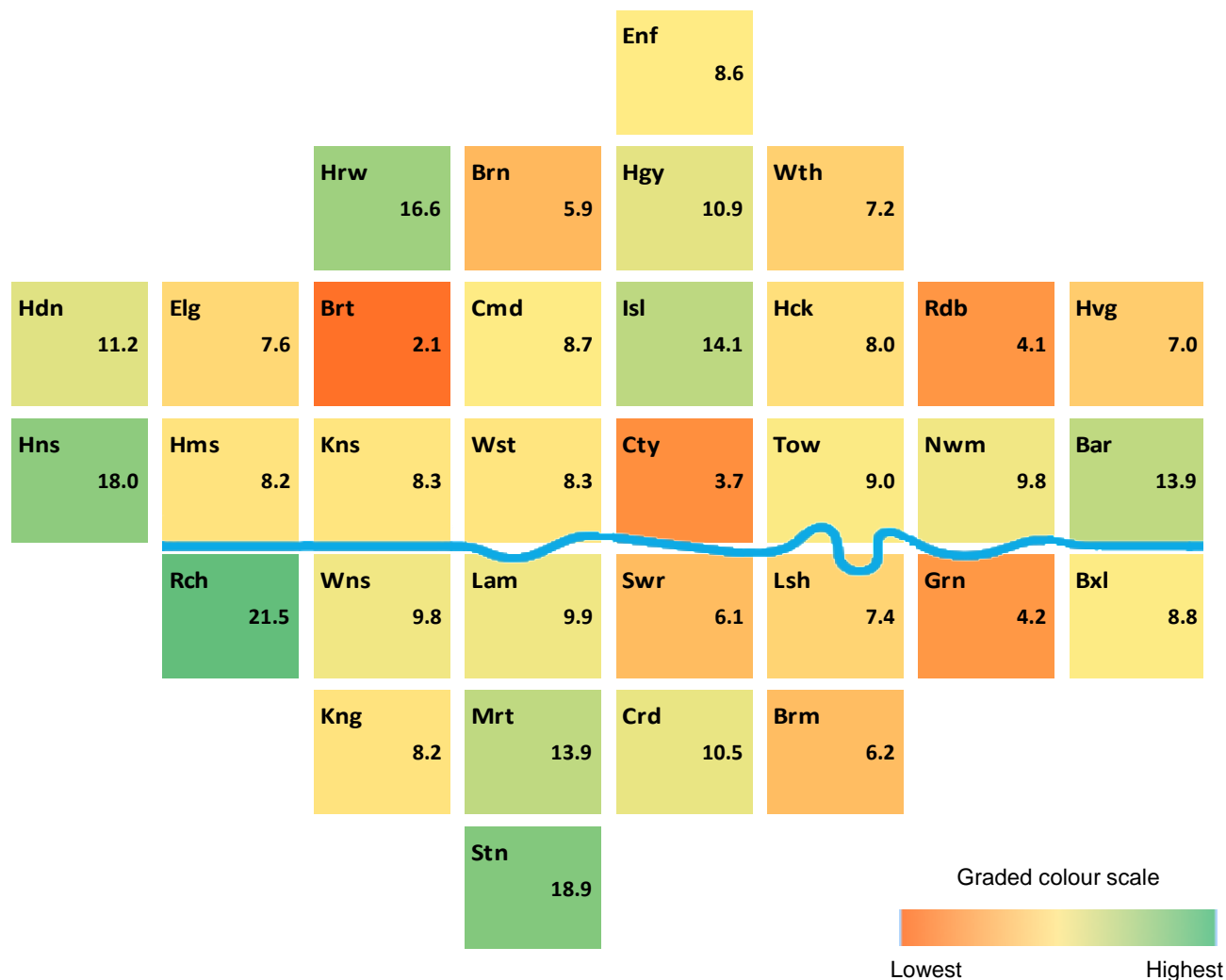


Trends in school readiness in London

Percentage point difference in school readiness between 2012/13 and 2013/14

School readiness **improved** in all London boroughs between 2012/13 and 2013/14

The biggest increases were seen in Richmond upon Thames (21.5 percentage points), Sutton (18.9 percentage points), Hounslow (18.0 percentage points) and Harrow (16.6 percentage points)



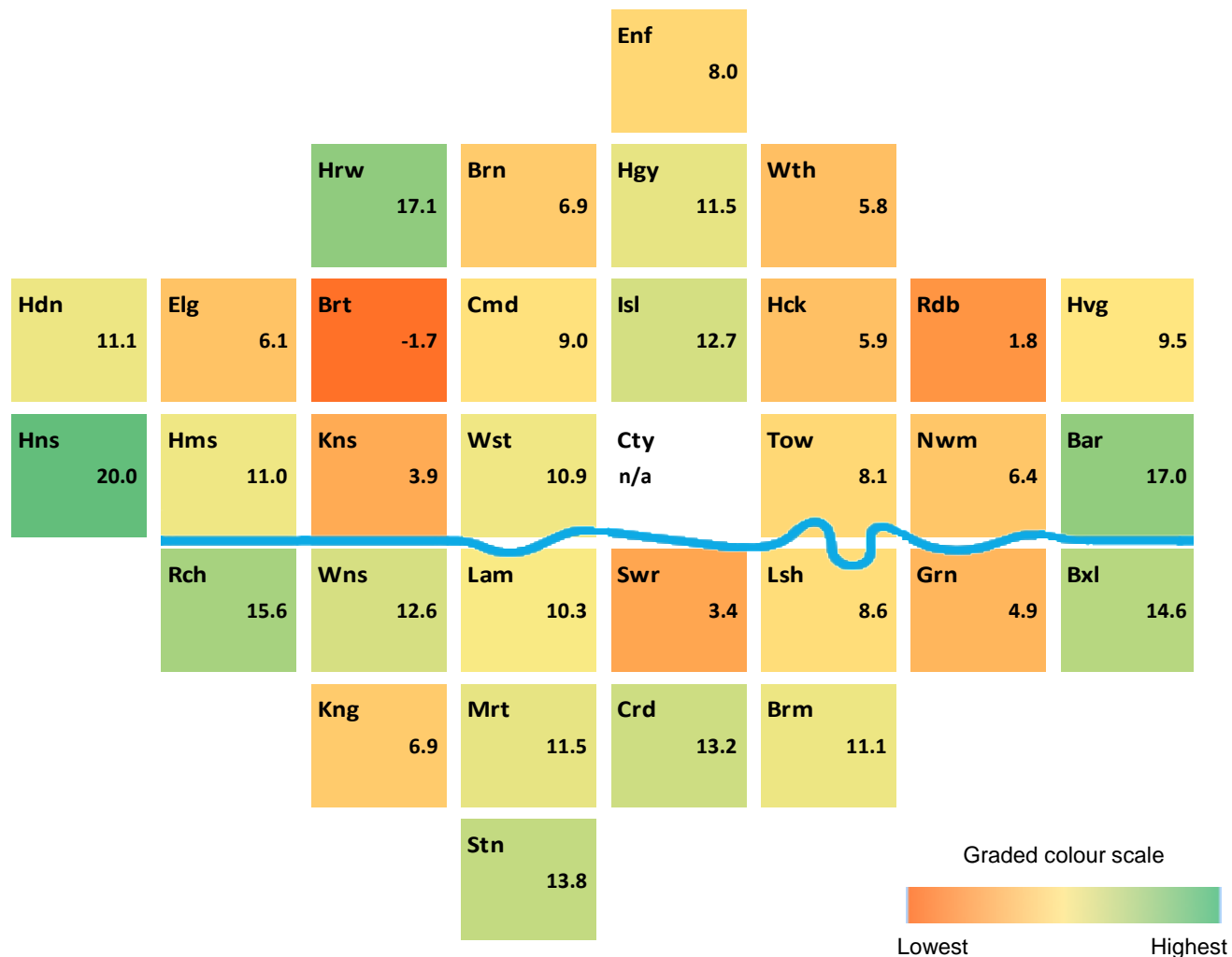
Trends in school readiness in London

Percentage point difference in school readiness in children receiving free school meals between 2012/13 and 2013/14

School readiness for children receiving free school meals **improved in 31/33** London boroughs between 2012/13 and 2013/14

The biggest increases were seen in Hounslow (20.0 percentage points), Harrow (17.1 percentage points) and Barking and Dagenham (17.0 percentage points)

School readiness decreased by 1.7 percentage points in Brent



What works to improve school readiness?



- good maternal mental health
- learning activities, including speaking to your baby and reading with your child
- enhancing physical activity
- parenting support programmes
- high-quality early education

Maternal mental health and school readiness

One of the **strongest** predictors of wellbeing in early years is the mental health and wellbeing of the mother or caregiver



1 in 10 women

will suffer from a perinatal mental illness, that's about 13,400 new mothers in London

5x

Children of mothers with mental ill-health are **five times** more likely to have mental health problems themselves

Impact of maternal depression on school readiness

Behaviour problems

Impaired parent child attachment

Emotional problems

Conduct disorders

Language development delay

Learning difficulties

Actions to reduce maternal depression include



Development of a shared vision and plan



Effective screening and referral to services



Family strengthening and support



Increased public awareness

Learning activities and school readiness

A child's communication environment is a **more dominant predictor** of early language than their social background

High income



1116 words

Low income



525 words

By the **age of 3** children from low income families have:

- heard on average **30 million fewer words** than children in high income families
- **half the vocabulary** of children in high income families

Language proficiency is a **key predictor** of school success

61% of low income children have no books at home

1 in 4 children leave primary school without reading well
this rises to

2 in 5 poorer children leave primary school without reading well

£23 billion

If all children were reading well by age 11, GDP in England in 2020 could be an extra £23 billion

Actions to improve a child's communication include

1. Research

Social marketing to identify current practices and potential cultural barriers

2. Develop

Development of a strategic plan, including development and dissemination of resources

3. Implement

Dissemination of information to reach the community using existing structures

4. Evaluate

This should include short-term process measures and agreed long-term outcome measures

Physical activity for young children is an **important** component of early brain development and learning

Movement skills such as eye skills and manipulative skills help children access curricular activities with **enjoyment and success**. Communication skills **depend** on well developed physical skills



1 in 10 children

aged 2–4 meet the CMO guidelines of being physically active daily for **at least 180 minutes (3 hours)**, spread throughout the day

Benefits of physical activity include:



Helps develop coordination and movement skills



Promotes healthy weight



Strengthens developing muscles and bones



Helps children develop social skills

Actions to promote physical activity in early years include



Plan and develop

Develop initiatives which target adults who interact with children in the early years



Work with parents and carers

Provide information on the importance of physical activity and what counts as physical activity



Work with early years settings

Integrate physical activity into the daily routine when planning activities

Parenting has a **bigger influence** on a child's life chances in the early years than education, wealth or class

Effective, warm, authoritative **parenting** gives children confidence, stimulates brain development and the capacity to learn



2 in 5 children

miss out on 'good' parenting

Supporting parents with parenting programmes has a **positive impact** on both parents' and children's wellbeing and mental health and is an **important** part of prevention and early intervention

Impact of parenting support programmes on school readiness

Benefits of the Family Nurse Partnership include **better**:



- language development
- vocabulary and mental processing
- emotional development
- attention and behaviour

Benefits of early family training/parenting support include **improved**:



- numeracy skills
- vocabulary
- letter identification
- emergent writing skills
- parent-child interaction

Actions to improve parenting support programmes include



Understand parent's needs and how to engage them



Intervene early to maximise impact and reduce longer-term costs



Increase the **accessibility** of programmes



Ensure **better integration** and **co-ordination** of parenting support services



Improve the **quality** and build the **evidence base** for support services

High-quality early education and school readiness

By the **age of five** the brain forms as many as

700

neural connections per second

High-quality early years education **significantly improves** child health and educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children

2.5 x

The average **economic benefit** of early education programmes for low income 3 and 4 year-olds is nearly **2.5 times** the investment

20-50%

If all low income children received high-quality early education the gap in achievement could be closed by as much as **20-50%**

Impact of high-quality early education



Improved school readiness



Improved future academic attainment



Improved future productivity



Higher levels of employment



Less involvement in crime

Actions to improve high-quality early education include

Systems development

- continued and increasing investment
- integrated services
- workforce training

Structural development

- favourable staff to child ratios
- encouragement of parents to support and engage more actively
- focus on cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning

Process development

- adoption of more responsive and nurturing staff: child relationships
- work towards an equal balance of child and adult initiated activity

Useful resources

- www.beststart.org
- <http://www.eif.org.uk>
- <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html>
- www.literacytrust.org.uk
- www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk
- www.wordsforlife.co.uk

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following individuals for their comments on the report:

- Professor Viv Bennett, Director of Nursing, PHE
- Alison Burton, Maternity and Early Years Lead, PHE
- Eustace DeSousa, National Lead - Children, Young People and Families, PHE
- Dr Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director, PHE London
- Lucy Fordham, Press Officer, PHE London
- Denise McCoy, Principle Knowledge Transfer Facilitator, London Knowledge and Intelligence Team, PHE
- Liz Prosser, Healthy Schools London Manager, Greater London Authority

Picture credits

- Piggy-bank by Maico Amorim from the Noun Project
- Team by Stephen Borengasser from the Noun Project
- School by Chris Cole from the Noun Project
- London by Dreams Icon from the Noun Project
- Broke by Effach from the Noun Project
- Bathroom by Rafael Farias Leão from the Noun Project
- Children by Gilad Fried from the Noun Project
- Reading by Oleg Frolov from the Noun Project
- Report by João Marcelo Ribeiro from the Noun Project
- Scale by Alex Sheyn from the Noun Project
- Campaign by PJ Souders from the Noun Project
- Child by Jens Tarning from the Noun Project
- Child by George Patterson from the Noun Project
- Money by Jamie Wilson from the Noun Project
- Student by Gerald Wildmoser from the Noun Project

About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.

Public Health England

Wellington House

133-155 Waterloo Road

London SE1 8UG

Tel: 020 7654 8000

www.gov.uk/phe

Twitter: [@PHE_uk](https://twitter.com/PHE_uk)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland

Prepared by: Dr Marilena Korkodilos, Deputy director, specialist public health services

© Crown copyright 2015

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit [OGL](https://www.ogcl.gov.uk) or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Published August 2015

PHE publications gateway number: 2015238