

# new lines of communication

With changes afoot in the sector, 4Children's head of early years, **Sue Robb**, introduces an online resource designed to keep you fully up-to-date...

**T**he Foundation Years has moved into a new era. Government is making far-reaching changes within the early years and childcare sector, from the new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to the introduction of systems such as Payment by Results in children's centres. While these reforms may take some time to come fully into effect, one thing is certain: clear lines of communication between Government and sector professionals will play an essential role in determining the success and impact of the changes.

The Government called on voluntary and community organisations to bid to deliver a number of key programmes of support for the children and family sector. Within the early years and childcare sector, 4Children was announced as the strategic lead partner, and we are working with Children England, The Fatherhood Institute and the Daycare Trust as part of a diverse and skilled partnership. Our key aims include communicating policy to parents and the sector, supporting providers, acting as a critical friend to Government, and representing the views of the early years and childcare sector to politicians and the public.

## Solid foundations

An important part of our efforts to ensure transparent communication and to support the sector has been the launch of a new online portal, Families in the Foundation Years: From pregnancy to children age 5 ([foundationyears.org.uk](http://foundationyears.org.uk)). The website is a handy one-stop shop, which guides professionals and parents towards tailored, professional information, advice and support, presented in a user-friendly way. Since we launched the website in October 2011, around 10,000 users have logged on each month, which is a fantastic start. We hope to be able to reach out to as many people as possible and anticipate that we will see lots of activity when the new EYFS is launched.

The parent section of the website is a great source of accurate and up-to-date information and resources, which help to empower

mothers and fathers and put them in the driving seat of their child's future. The professional section of the website is designed to support practitioners who work in childcare, health or education across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Professionals can visit the website to find useful updates and information from across the sector. It also provides practical support for the day-to-day challenges they may encounter in their work. In addition to hosting information on policy developments, relevant sector news, events, seminars and useful publications, it will feature downloadable resources and an array of case studies setting out examples of best practice. In the spring of this year, this site will host the new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and associated materials and guidance.

One of the most important functions of the portal is to facilitate communication by allowing professionals to build valuable relationships with one another, and remain up-to-date with developments and best practice in related areas. The strategic partnership also produces a series of monthly newsletters, which brings

together information from across the sector to keep parents and professionals abreast of the latest developments. The more people contribute to these newsletters, the more useful it will be – so please do get in contact at [foundations@4children.org.uk](mailto:foundations@4children.org.uk) and send in details of any news, events, briefings, or conferences you're holding, and we'll make sure people know about them. In doing so, we can all do our bit to help develop the strong sense of community within our sector that will benefit us all, and really deliver for the children we work with.



**Clear lines of communication between Government and sector**

**professionals will play an essential role in determining the success and impact of the changes**

**SUE ROBB**



**New EYFS:  
Are you ready?**

**VISIT [FOUNDATIONYEARS.ORG.UK](http://FOUNDATIONYEARS.ORG.UK) FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION AND TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEW EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE DOCUMENT.**