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To All children's leads in Strategic Health Authorities

Dear Colleagues

Children's centres implementation update 5 : Engaging Health Colleagues

I attach a paper that I have written to help the Nominated Strategic Officers in Local Authorities to engage health organisations in the development of children's centres.

Some LAs are having difficulty engaging health as in many areas the view is that children's centres are only about education and childcare. In reality they are a mechanism for providing a seamless service for parents from conception to the time that the child starts school, building on Sure Start Local programmes, Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nurseries, most of which will themselves become children's centres. In order to create an integrated approach it is vital that health organisations are fully involved in the planning and implementation of the children's centre development.

I know that some of you are working closely with the Sure Start Regional team and they are finding your working arrangements very helpful in understanding the complexity of the health agenda and jointly identifying the many areas of common interest. I am sure that the LAs would appreciate any help that you can provide in facilitating contacts with the local health trusts and I have given them your contact details in the Implementation Update annex.

I would be grateful if you would distribute this Update and its annex to the Children's Leads in all of the Trusts in your area so that they have an understanding of what is expected, and what can be gained, by their full co-operation.

I hope this will enhance working across the health sector and Local Authorities within your area as it is only by having an integrated approach that we can achieve the best outcomes for families and the most efficient and effective use of our resources, in accordance with Every Child Matters.

If I can be of any help in this work, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your help

Yours faithfully

Caroline Healy
Health Adviser

