

- ⇒ Evidence suggest that these are the four key dimensions of good quality pedagogy for all children under three:
  - ⇒ Stable relationships and interactions with sensitive and responsive adults
  - ⇒ A focus on play-based activities and routines which allow children to take the lead in their own learning
  - ⇒ Support for communication and language
  - ⇒ Opportunities to move and be physically active.(Sound Foundations, 2014)
- ⇒ Children without secure parental bonds are more likely to have behaviour and literacy problems. (Baby Bonds, 2014)
- ⇒ Boys growing up in poverty are two and a half times less likely to display behaviour problems at school if they have secure attachments with parents in the early years. (Baby Bonds, 2014)
- ⇒ In the UK the poorest children are already 11 months behind when starting school. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)
- ⇒ More than half of the gaps in achievement at age 11 are due to inequality that was already present at age five. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)
- ⇒ There is a 17.7% difference between the richest and poorest students achieving a good level of development in 2015, an improvement from 21.2% in 2007. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)
- ⇒ One third of staff working in group-based nurseries still lack either English or Maths GCSE or both. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)
- ⇒ Targeted places for disadvantaged two-year-olds continue, but nearly 1/3rd of eligible two-year-olds do not take up their place, while many of the available places for two-year-olds are not in the highest quality settings. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)
- ⇒ Changes to benefits and tax credits are projected to lead to sharp increases in child poverty in the next five years. (Closing Gaps Early, 2017)

## Recommendations

- The move towards quantity over quality could put at risk the progress made in closing the gap in school readiness between disadvantaged children and their better-off peers. The Sutton Trust calls for the government to ensure new childcare policies are not implemented at the expense of high-quality learning for early years.
- We would like to see funding secured to ensure that qualified teachers remain in place in school nursery and reception classes, including granting early years teachers Qualified Teacher Status and giving support for professional development.
- We also call for parental leave policies to be extended to provide enhanced entitlements for fathers, to increase father involvement and promote greater gender equity.
- Income support for families should be provided at an adequate level so that financial insecurity does not undermine other investments like parental leave and high quality childcare.