

## Building a Sense of Place

—Lord Andrew Mawson

We often don't see what is right in front of our noses. When Tesco arrived in Bromley-by-Bow, East London, shortly after I had arrived as a young Minister in the neighbourhood some thirty years ago, most people felt a misplaced, anti-business reaction to the store even though we had 39% unemployment at the time and a real need for work opportunity. Many didn't see the benefits of entrepreneurial partnerships; thankfully, we do now. My passion to make a lasting difference began with local people, their stories and experience and not with policies, statistics and theory. But, through getting to know our community, I learned the importance of a business approach in making our dreams possible and keeping them alive.

I began building my sense of place by walking the streets, visiting the markets, the schools and the businesses, to understand what was happening in our community to keep it from fulfilling its potential. Getting close to people, building relationships and gaining the community's trust can lead to some unusual and unorthodox experiences, but people see you getting stuck-in and willing to get your hands dirty in a way that few politicians and policy makers do. They start to invest personally in you and open doors to their networks – other people who can help you really start to get things moving.

This last year has been a bit of a rollercoaster for our society in many

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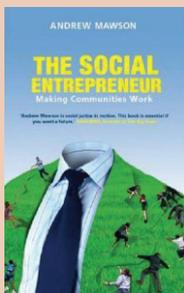


# PEOPLE

ways – there has been a lot of focus on financial cuts and potential losses. I think we should, in these difficult times, back success and look to the future even if the lie of the land looks pretty lumpy and inhospitable. Steve Jobs reckoned that being fired from Apple enabled him to feel the “lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life”. It gave him the chance to look at the world through a different lens and invest in new areas of work with his rediscovered passion to change his world.

The children’s centre world is changing too. Gone are the certainties of the grants and the support of Local Authorities but this new year brings the opportunity to re-examine the positives in each community; identify the potential partners and local entrepreneurs who can share and back your vision. It’s a great time to be positioning yourselves in the centre of local innovation and enterprise. Children’s centre communities have impressive records and a passion for making something out of nothing; you have many pieces of the jigsaw and through entrepreneurial glasses you may see a sharper picture. By mobilising what and who is on your doorstep, by using sound business models, by laying one brick at a time, you could create a sense of place built on a foundation that will outlast the next gust of grant-change wind. This is the time to think differently!

positioning yourselves in the centre of local innovation and enterprise



Andrew Mawson  
— Lord Mawson OBE

Read Andrew’s best-selling book – The Social Entrepreneur: Making Communities Work. Available on the [website](#)

## Culture Construct

Vicki Lant

When service resources are shrinking like your favourite jumper in a boil wash, doing what you always did may not be the strategy for survival or development. More of the same is likely to take you into an even faster spiral of decline, so in this issue we are exploring ways to build our future differently with the people around us.

**Leading others**, can sometimes mean leading without authority, which is familiar territory to Children’s Centre Leaders (CCLs). As architects of our centre’s, and often community’s, vision we create the dream that others want to buy into and we take responsibility for finding the people and sustaining the motivation to build it into a reality. More and more, those working with us may not be direct staff reports. It’s likely that they will be families, local entrepreneurs, partners – people who want to contribute because they can see the vision makes sense and they can make real a difference, not because you pay their wages. In leading others we wear a number of different hats in governance, line management, project leadership and as coach. Fundamental to the success of how we work in these contexts is building relationships in order that people can see that they are, or could be, valued in the enterprise. News in a community spreads, good or bad, and if it feels good to be in your centre and working with you, because you get things done – that message will transmit (even faster with Twitter).

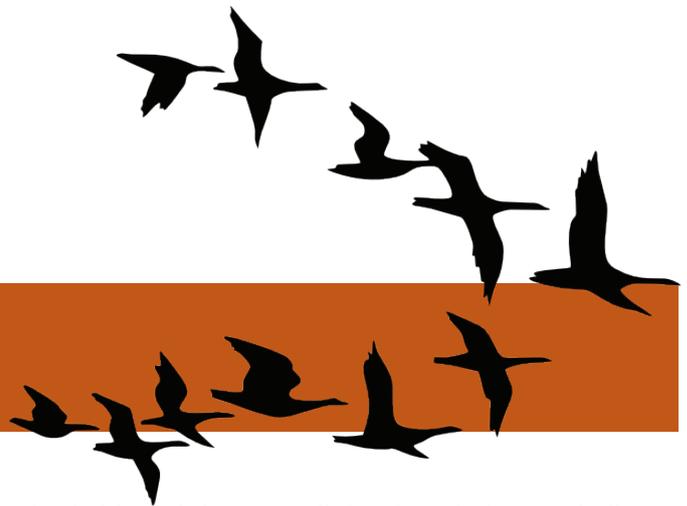
Lord Mawson encourages us to think differently. Someone who does that is Tony Hsieh (pronounced Shay), Chief Executive of Zappos.com, an online clothing retailer. For him organisational culture is key. He expects every employee to live by the company’s ten core values:

- Deliver **WOW** through service
- Embrace and drive change
- Create fun with a little **Weirdness**
- Be adventurous, creative and **open**-minded
- pursue **growth** and learning
- Build open and honest relationships with communication
- Build a positive **team and family** spirit
- Do **more** with **less**
- Be **passionate** and determined
- Be **humble**

Don’t these resonate with how we like to do things? Wouldn’t many of our families and partners get behind these? Tony Hsieh also widens his approach to communication, expecting his teams to use social media in responsible and savvy ways to connect with his customers. He understands that the goal of social media is to connect and build relationships – “if your customer is talking, listen to them - listen and love; the best strategy is to go where your customers are”. Are there some new directions for us here?

Build a positive team and family spirit

Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky in their article in



the Harvard Business Review, [A Survival Guide for Leaders](#) (June 2002) recognise that leading others in times of unprecedented change from known situations to unfamiliar territory can be scary and uncomfortable. They have some important leadership strategies to offer and importantly, suggestions to anchor and sustain you in tough times. The government policy framework [Supporting Families in the Foundation Years](#), is proposing opportunities for centres to find creative ways with others to offer core services:

**“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create**

- Albert Einstein -

Vicki Lant

programme leader serco partnership NPQICL

## Scaffolding the Future

Jan Casson

The role of a Children Centre leader is wide and varied, even more so when you lead and manage a large rural area. My patch covers over 800 square miles of sparsely populated rural Northumberland, with distances between centres of anything from 17 to 37 miles. The need to have a daily presence in each of the centres to provide the face to face leadership has to be balanced against the needs of the whole service, when inspections, safeguarding issues or management tasks dictate a greater presence at one or more of our venues.

As a manager I have to anticipate, plan, organise, set boundaries, allocate tasks, predict service need, budget and allocate resources. As a leader I have to help build a vision, support and challenge managers and their staff, encourage creativity, innovation, and brave thinking, and support each staff member to build their skills and capabilities to ensure we offer a high quality service to all our children, families and their communities.

**“creativity and innovative thinking”**

The needs of the service have changed dramatically over the past two years, and as a leader the challenge is to keep up to date with evidenced-based practice, current, thinking, and the wide array of best practice out there

in the field, and then use all that knowledge to challenge inspire, energise and motivate the team.

When faced with falling budgets, growing work-loads, and core costs that continue to rise, it is very easy for staff to become disheartened and weary. As leaders we have to continually find the light at the end of the tunnel, no matter how small the beam. Children’s Centres on the whole attract staff who are totally committed to improving services for children and families. As leaders we need to develop and nurture that commitment, ensuring our teams have the tools they need for the jobs we give them, the back-up and security to know they will be supported and the confidence to know we will also encourage their creativity and innovative thinking. But in return, we expect professional judgement, high levels of enthusiasm and the ability to demand and deliver the best possible service to improve outcomes for all children, especially those children for whom a positive impact could be life changing.

At the same time we need to nurture the aspiring leaders in our teams, using distributed leadership and seeking out those for whom continuing professional development might take them towards a management or leadership role. We need to be open to the ideas of the newly qualified staff and the volunteers who join us; all have a valuable role to play in developing programme leadership.

**“nurture the aspiring leaders in, our teams”**

As a leader we are the keeper of the vision, but it must be a vision that is constantly being revitalised and refreshed, and is shared by the staff, volunteers and parents, understood by our partners and wider stakeholders, and most importantly a vision that supports clear and tangible benefits for every child in our community.



Jan Casson

children’s centre locality manager (north northumberland)

# PEOPLE

## Creating Flex for the Stress

Mike Gasper

Mentoring and coaching allow us time and space to step back from the turmoil and torrent of practice, to take stock and to reflect on where we have come from, where we are, where we want to be and how we might get there. In the language of architects and builders, they may be moments of synchronisation; to reflect on the alignment of vision with all parties contributing to it. Peer mentoring, including team and group mentoring, allows the shared knowledge of practice context and structures to become the foundation of trust and provides the basis for mutual learning, an important part of mentoring practice.  **foundation of trust** Underpinning everything else is mutuality: parties are equal and the balance of the interaction will change during sessions, even though the mentor retains overall control.

If the balance is achieved, mentoring and coaching can provide:

**better self-knowledge as a person and as a professional**

**improved awareness of own and others' perspectives, motivations, hopes and fears**

**better understanding of contextual factors and influences (complexities)**

**improved recognition of what can be achieved as well as understanding of limitations**

**improved skills and strategies for addressing needs**

**encouragement to be honest and to overcome limiting or potentially destructive forces such as: denial, over idealisation, blame culture and avoidance.**

It is important to negotiate an agreed framework within which the interaction can operate, with a clear understanding of confidentiality and what this actually means, for example, as mentors we cannot condone illegal acts. The framework should allow a safe and sound structure within which to explore areas which are hidden beyond the superficial or where the mentee is reluctant to go. It should also make clear the boundaries: mentoring is not counselling and the mentor must be clear about what is within and what is outside their remit. The

framework should allow the mentor to:

**establish trust, empathy, mutual respect and confidentiality**

**encourage a reflective exploration moving from the 'known' to the 'unknown'**

**listen deeply**

**respectfully challenge**

**provide an independent perspective without being prescriptive**

**show sympathy, warmth and respect**

**use problem solving and creative techniques**

**be open themselves to question and challenge**

**be honest and recognise limitations**

From the mentee perspective it should encourage them to:

**problematised and try out ideas in a secure environment**

**recognise issues and the realities involved**

**develop realistic priorities and strategies appropriate to their situation**

**improve the balance of demands, particularly between the course and their daily professional and personal lives**

We often say, "within these four walls . . ." The process is very like building: trust is the foundation and the framework provides the steelwork, but the interaction then creates the fabric, unique to the mentee to express her/himself within the construct. It is important to make clear the nature of the process over the agreed sessions so that the mentee has an overall view from the start and I like to establish a relationship exchanging some personal professional information, all of which can be completed by email in advance.

Mentoring involves deep listening. This will often mean raising your own awareness of what is really being said and what isn't and will often require questioning to clarify or to enable the mentee to clarify what it is they are really saying. Sometimes mentees will be content to stick to practical issues and avoid their own emotional involvement. Judging when to draw attention to this or to challenge requires skill and sensitivity to the mentee's needs



and well-being. Sometimes coaching is more like 'coaxing'. It is important to be comfortable with silence: it doesn't necessarily mean disengagement; rather it can be a sign of deeper engagement. Deep listening allows the mentor to be aware of recurring themes, for example, a particular name or situation. Drawing attention to this can help a mentee recognize an underlying concern. I use a note book when mentoring, if the mentee agrees, and this helps with my own concentration and awareness and is invaluable when reviewing the session with the mentee and providing a written summary. As much as possible I try to avoid giving direct advice unless the mentee asks and even then I try to get them to be able to answer their own needs, or to clarify the achievable alternatives.

The review process helps to frame the process and any key points which can also become action points for the mentee. I believe it is important to provide a written summary which the mentee can adjust if they wish, and where possible to include specific and achievable action points which have emerged during a session. Mentoring foundations may help you weather the stresses you encounter along the way.

Mike Gasper  
mentor and facilitator NPQICL

## Fundamentally Right Connections

Louise Jackson

'We are excited about the future,' said Louise Jackson, the National Project Leader, Early Years NETWORKs. 'As the project comes to the end of the first year, we can now see the impact of strong local networks on staff morale, improving services for children and families and attitudes to change'. Through visits, case studies and exchanging ideas, centre leaders are encouraged to plan for their local communities and target services where they are needed most. Leaders are facing considerable challenges with cuts to budgets, a reduction in staffing and changes in line management and organisation. Through the programme, there are opportunities to rethink the centre's vision and values, to consider how to mobilise an effective advisory board and involve parents to help shape the centre's future and target services.

Nationally, Children's Centres have been severely affected by changes in the 'ring fencing' of grant funding from Local Government. The Early Intervention Grant allocated to Local Authorities must now fund a wide range of services and the term 'early intervention' is often stretched to cover any service delivered by Local Government to meet local needs. There continues to be widespread closure of centres and a reduction in services for the most vulnerable

in society, but out of the ashes new ways of working are now emerging including cluster models, carousels and the involvement of voluntary and private enterprise.

**"I've gone from overwhelming concern over the challenges I face to celebrating success, feeling good and energised to do more"**

This was the feedback from one Children's Centre Leader at the end of a ten day programme of training with The National Education Trust. The discussion, debate and development programme has been designed to promote high quality early education, and outreach services for children and families in the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

A celebration event was held in December 2011 at the British Association of Early Childhood Education for Children's Centre Leaders who have completed their training and are now members of the Early Years NETWORKs recently established in London. Similar Early Years NETWORKs have also been set up in Birmingham, Lancashire and Bristol with plans for further regional NETWORKs in 2013.

It is clear from the stories shared during each day of training that children's centres are 'best' placed to support families in crisis. The trained multi agency teams are able to work together to address even the most complex of needs and through a coordinated and joined-up approach are able to break inter-generational cycles of deprivation. The National Education Trust aims to use Government funding to support and build NETWORKs of strong leaders who will embrace and lead change, and motivated teams who are committed to improving quality and raising standards across the sector.

The project has been funded by the Department for Education and is closely monitored and evaluated both internally by The National Education Trust and externally via the Department of Education. The project received the highest possible rating from the DfE when they carried out a detailed review of the project recently.

Time is limited, funding from the Department ends in March 2013 but the project will continue. Like those we are working with in children's centres, the charity is subject to 'payment by results'. The National Education Trust will secure future financial funding for their work in early years by showing the evidence of impact. Join us in embracing the challenge and join an Early Years NETWORK in 2012. For more information please contact [louise@nationaleducationtrust.net](mailto:louise@nationaleducationtrust.net) or [rachel@nationaleducationtrust.net](mailto:rachel@nationaleducationtrust.net)

Louise Jackson  
national project leader - early years NETWORKs

# PEOPLE

**Leadership context** Albemarle Barracks is located five miles north of Prudhoe Children's Centre, Hexham Northumberland. The Barracks are home to approximately 50 children under 5 and their families, with facilities also available to families living in accommodation at Windsor Gardens, Dumpling Hall and Hazelrigg in Newcastle.

Links with both the Unit Welfare Office and the Army Welfare Service were established towards the end of 2006 and families were supported to access Children's Centre Services at Prudhoe.

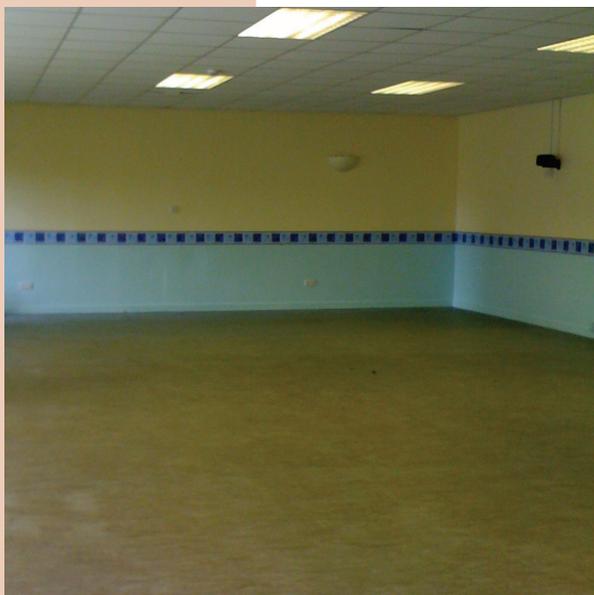
Services provided included:

Unit Welfare Office is a 'one stop shop', signposting families to a range of services.

Army Welfare Service provides one to one support and community activities

Fortnightly Baby Clinic operated by Health Visitors and Nursery Nurse at Ponteland Health Centre

**Jellytots** baby and toddler group run by mums



## Realising a Dream

Jackie McCormick

**Leadership challenge** Families living at Albemarle Barracks are particularly isolated due to the rural location and lack of public transport.

**Leadership vision** To create a partnership arrangement that would bring bespoke services to the service families without a number of long and difficult journeys.

**Leadership action** The Unit Welfare Service operates from premises consisting of office space, meeting room, large hall, kitchen facilities, toilets, IT room and fenced garden. Over the past few months Prudhoe Children's Centre and the Unit Welfare Office have been working in partnership to revision the premises to make them more accessible and inviting for families with young children. The Unit Welfare Office (via grant funding) have made extensive improvements to the premises (previously used mainly as an officers' mess) including a new kitchen, painting walls, new carpets, children's murals, notice boards and created a new meeting room.

Prudhoe Children's Centre has commissioned a Nursery Nurse from Ponteland Health Centre to consult local families on the new toys and equipment and to design the layout of the large hall. Prudhoe Children's Centre has provided the toys and equipment (arising from the consultation) to furnish the new facility. The Nursery Nurse is also commissioned to deliver a weekly stay and play session, which now runs from the improved facility.

**Leadership outcome** A protocol has been drafted detailing arrangements for shared use of the building. The facilities are being provided free of charge. Service delivery costs are currently being met by Prudhoe Children's Centre. A plethora of new services have developed...



Weekly Stay and Play session delivered by Nursery Nurse at Ponteland, commissioned by Prudhoe Children's Centre

Monthly Toy Library with Stay and Play Session

Adapt Community Transport (part funded by Prudhoe CC) providing outings and a 'wheels to work' project providing scooters and driving lessons to mums and young people to access work opportunities off site

Programme of Greenstart activities through 'Growing Spaces for Play' funding.

Family Support Team undertaking one to one work with families

Baby Save a Life Course

Childcare/crèche – 1 session per week, the group wants to expand to some full day care Currently exploring providers and Ofsted registration

Involvement in army decompression days

Dads work

Referral to domestic violence support group

Family learning courses

Parenting courses

Links with Job Centre Plus

New sign and name agreed

New logo – under discussion



**Leadership reflection** There was always strong support from the Unit Welfare Office and from families living on camp to 'badge' this facility as an outreach post of Prudhoe Children's Centre. The rapid generation of activities has all the hallmarks of barrack families taking a strong lead in securing the services they value, having seen evidence of organisations valuing their families and their lives.

Jackie McCormick

Locality Manager, Sure Start Children's Centres West - Northumberland



## Firmer Foundations - Higher Aspirations

Sue Webster

The past twelve years of a national agenda to develop an integrated approach to early childhood services have brought together many professions who would previously not have had an opportunity to share their skills and knowledge. Many of the new relationships created are so obvious it seems odd that they had not been formally established before. But it has only been part of our recent history to focus on the health and well-being of the youngest members of society and create warm, friendly environments where all parents can gather to meet together to gain mutual support, information and signposting to any services they need as a community of families.

As children's centre leaders we have accepted a national challenge, it is not a challenge with a simple, logical solution. It is a challenge to address an aspect of society that has never been formally addressed, nationally, before. It is what Keith Grint (2010) refers to as a 'wicked problem.' Can we prevent some of the social ills that have emerged historically without creating a culture of dependency and enabling families to have pride, success and become self-sufficient? As leaders of children's centres, we accept the challenge, but we know we cannot succeed alone. We have gained expertise in engaging with thousands of children and families and established local and national professional networks to learn from one another (Webster & Clouston, in Trodd and Chivers, 2011). We have built teams, inspired, motivated and led other professionals, organisations and communities to work with us. We are committed to lead and to be led as partners within real and virtual structures in our communities and have contributed to a web of services that are valued as an enduring legacy for future generations.

One of the interesting outcomes of the pioneering stage of our development has been an opportunity to work with environmental planners, architects and building professionals. Without a national investment in our work we may never have met and while the process of building new centres was often frustrating and stressful, this interaction will have influenced our perspectives. In a parallel process we built specialist teams to bring life, soul and passion into the newly created children's spaces. Architect, Adrian Cooper, worked with Julie Fisher

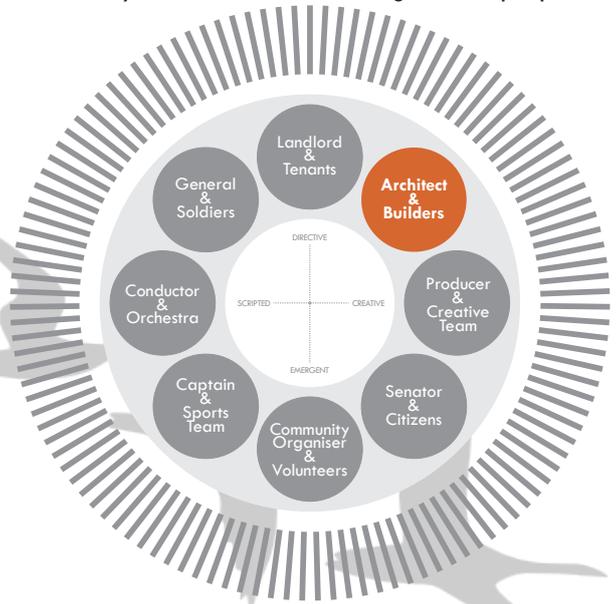
to explore the notion of 'foundations' as defined in the construction industry and in education as they worked together during the planning stages of a new generation of early years centres in Oxfordshire (Fisher, 2002). Together they deconstructed seven key principles of knowledge about building foundations and later worked with a range of early years professional to explore this analysis. The table (right) lists these principles with a new leadership dimension added by the Children's Centre Leader Reader.

Cooper describes his profession as a 'jack of all trades', which children's centre leaders often use about themselves as they progress from roles within a distinct professional background to

leading integrated services that traverse professional boundaries and heritages. Have you ever considered a metaphor that best describes a children's centre leader? Are you a leader of followers or 'leader of leaders' (Jones and Pound, 2008)?

Deloitte commissioned a global research project to explore what modern leadership looks like. The project undertook extensive research across a range of disciplines and proposes a new definition of collective leadership (Baghai and Quigley, 2011). They call it **As One** and it represents the 'leadership results in a cohesive group of people working together effectively toward a common goal or purpose'.

“Can we prevent some of the social ills that have emerged historically without creating a culture of dependency?”



The eight leadership archetypes (Baghai and Quigley, 2011:13)



## Foundation facts in Architecture

Foundations take longer to create than buildings

The higher the building, the firmer the foundations have to be

The more stress the building is likely to face the more flexible the foundations need to be

When building on poor ground, the foundations must be strengthened to compensate

If new buildings are to be added to existing buildings, making the right connections between the foundations is crucial

When testing foundations early strength is not a reliable predictor of later strength

If foundations are inadequate, it is very, very expensive to underpin them later on

## Lessons for early years educators

**'Children need time and space to deal with their anxieties, to take some risks and to think.'**  
Linda Pound

**'Place the emphasis on the whole child...they may never become complete if we rush their foundations.'**  
Margaret Edgington

**'Enable children to develop their trust, security, confidence and self esteem to weather the stresses and strains that life will bring their way.'**  
Marion Dowling

**'Adequate investment in time, money and expertise.'**  
Pauline Trudell, 2002

**'Start where learners are, ask questions rather than pass on answers directly and provide support rather than instruction.'**  
Wendy Scott

**'Focus on dispositions, social skills and emotional development rather than a narrow focus of literacy and numeracy to provide them with the foundations to be learners for life.'**  
Tony Bertram and Chris Pascal

**'High quality early education can do much to create a sense of mastery and resilience and can encourage belief in an ability to deal with change and adapt when necessary.'**  
Gillian Pugh

## Leadership lessons

**Establish trusting relationships and credibility takes time. Be patient.**

**Create an inclusive local network and develop a shared long-term vision. Listen and observe.**

**Give everyone a voice and have opportunities to reflect and critically evaluate projects. No blame culture.**

**Pool resources and focus on the process rather than the task.**

**Share and distribute leadership. Provide opportunities for appropriate supervision, group dialogue and mutual learning.**

**Focus on emotional intelligence to maintain individual and group relationships. Ticking boxes will not be an indicator of sustainable development..Focus on emotional intelligence to maintain individual and group relationships. Ticking boxes will not be an indicator of sustainable development.**

**Seek feedback and a critical friend to undertake self-evaluation and performance management.**

# PRACTICE

Eight leadership archetypes are identified that are clustered around a two-axis framework. On the vertical axis, there is a continuum covering the style used to exercise power ranging from directive to emergent approaches; while the horizontal axis spans how work is organised, between scripted instructions and creative solutions.

During NPQICL sessions children's centre leaders have often likened the leadership model of a children's centre to that of a conductor and orchestra, the silent conductor using a baton make things happen in a very organised and precise way. But Baghai and Quigley's (2011) research suggests that this is not really the model of best fit for children's centre leadership. There is perhaps a much closer fit between the architect and builder archetype.

Key characteristics as described by Baghai and Quigley, 2011:

## Conductor and orchestra

**'The conductor and orchestra sits directly on the scripted axis, there is little room for improvisation or creative interpretation of the score... the orchestra's goal is to play exactly from the score and follow the precise instructions of the conductor'**

**Orchestra members have clearly defined roles and tasks.**

**Orchestra members are given detailed and scripted processes to carry out with utmost precision.**

**Uniformity of orchestra members is critical to reinforce standardisation and efficiency.**

**Extensive training and orientation to ensure that the orchestra's tasks are precisely performed.**

**People primarily join the orchestra to pursue their own personal interests**

**There is a close relationship between compliance and incentives.' (p. 104/5)**

## Architect and builders

**'Architects provide a strong clear vision and direct people toward a goal. They rely on the innovative, ingenuity and diversity of the builders to achieve it. Before they have worked out the precise details of the project and how the blueprint will be brought to life, architects use their own passion, vision and conviction to persuade the best builders to join their project.'**

**Architects are visionaries with a goal that at times may seem like an impossible dream**

**Architects bring together a team of builders who have not only the right mix of skills but also a willingness to collaborate**

**Revolutionary problem solving is critical- the dream cannot be achieved by conventional thinking**

**Builders are given 'freedom within a frame': they are expected to solve problems creatively but at the same time, respect designated goals.**

**Success is about completing defined, scheduled tasks on time.**

**Builders, suppliers and other workers are interdependent links in a chain; their activities are synchronised.' (p.210-211).**

While there has been a set of core purposes for a children's centre to meet, now revised, these are not prescriptive. Throughout the short history of children's centres it has always been acknowledged that centres must be developed in line with local objectives using the local resources of knowledge to offer the most relevant services. It is the role of the children's centre leader to create the environment of 'revolutionary problem solving' by holding on to the vision no matter how unrealistic it may feel at the time and providing the motivation for the 'builders' to take time to create and embed new working practices and expertise.

An architect may see a structure that at the time is impossible to create technically but will work collaboratively with all the technical expertise



# children's Centre Leader Reader

recommended reads:

available to devise innovative solutions. This is what happened when Jørn Utzon was commissioned to design the Sydney Opera House. Today, acknowledged, as one of the most iconic buildings in the world, his vision for the building was technically impossible to build in 1957. Utzon worked with builders to overcome these technical challenges and was not prepared to compromise on his original vision. Consequently the project's completion was severely delayed and by the time the Opera House opened Utzon had experienced such criticism in the press that he left Australia and never returned to see the final result (Baghai and Quigley, 2011). Was Utzon a good leader, or exhibiting the behaviour of a stubborn perfectionist? It could be argued that the status, quality and beauty of the Sydney Opera House speaks for itself. But it could have been a very different story. Can the effectiveness of Utzon's leadership be measured by the quality of the end result?

Perhaps there is a parallel between the building of the Sydney Opera House and development of English children's centres? The construction of a national programme to address the 'wicked' problem of low educational achievement and poor health outcomes related to disadvantage in society? Impact outcomes have been slow to emerge because the initial foundations have taken time to construct and build upon. We have faced a great deal of external criticism from those who demand quick-wins, but have also maintained a strong conviction, commitment and passion to lead practitioners who work in centres and families who use services.

“Can the effectiveness of leadership be measured by the quality of the end result?”

The moral of this story: Place the emphasis on the 'whole' vision for children's centres, they may never be complete if we rush their foundations. The higher our aspirations for society, the firmer the foundations need to be to bring others along with us. (adapted from Edgington in Fisher, 2002)

Sue Webster

early childhood studies, lecturer, University of Warwick

**References:**

Baghai, M, & Quigley J. (2011), *As One: Individual action and collective power*. London: Penguin

Fisher, J (ed)(2002), *The foundations of learning*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Grint, K. (2010), *Leadership: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, C. & Pound L. (2008), *Leadership and management in the early years*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Trodd, L. & Chivers L. (2011) *Inter-professional working in practice: Learning and working together for children and families*. Maidenhead: Open University Press



Click any of the titles to find out more

**Suggested further reading**, three inspiring chapters written by children's centre leaders

**Duckmanton, I.** (2011) The possibilities of an imagined future: observing critical dilemmas in inter-professional and multi-agency working (pp.157-170) in Trodd, L. & Chivers L. (2011) *Inter-professional working in practice: Learning and working together for children and families*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

**Graham, S. & Jarvis, J.** (2011) leadership of uncertainty (pp.131-144) in Trodd, L. & Chivers L. (2011) *Inter-professional working in practice: Learning and working together for children and families*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

**Roberts, R.** (2011) Working together at a children's centre (pp. 113-125) in Reed, M. & Canning N. (eds) (2011), *Reflective practice in the early years*. London: Sage

# POLICY



**National College** - don't forget to register as a member for the Children's Centre Leader Network on the National College website. Resources will be placed there after regional meetings – use the discussion areas to begin debates about the leadership issues that exercise or excite you.

**Resources from the Autumn meeting**

## Government Policy development

### **Core Purpose of Sure Start Children's Centres**

The DfE published a brief article on its website summarising its planned actions arising from the summer consultation. Next steps:

The core purpose will be included in wider children's centre statutory guidance for local authorities. DfE will begin consultation on the statutory guidance in the new year

The core purpose will inform the national measures (DfE to local authority) that are tested in payment by results trial areas

DfE to work with the National College to drive change through their work with children's centre leaders, with the best leaders supporting their peers to improve, and through the review of the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)

A discussion forum has been set up on the (4Children led) **Families in the Foundation Years** website, so it becomes a sector wide resource

and the Department continues to draw on the sector's expertise to develop the text setting out how the core purpose can be achieved.



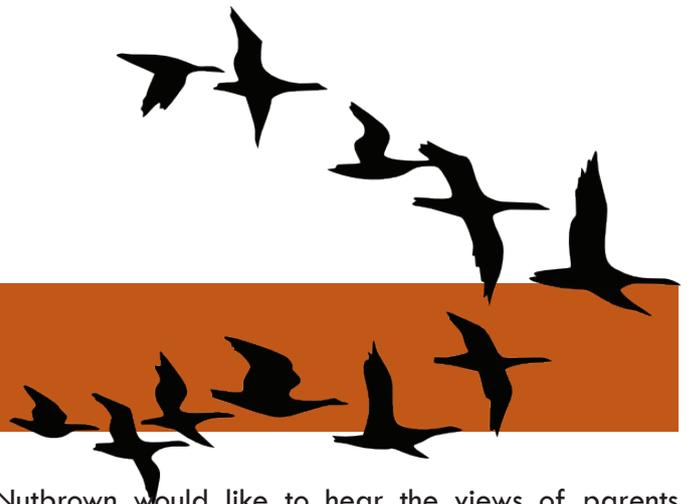
### **Targeting children's centre services on the most needy families** (December 2011)

This report commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) and produced by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) investigated how children's centres are targeting services on families in the greatest need of support. Using a literature review and six case studies, the report found that there was no definitive definition of such families. The process of identifying such families is not straightforward, and depends on service providers working together, drawing on multiple sources of information and interpreting data intelligently to improve services and outcomes. This work has implications for practice, including staff training and capacity. This information is also available in an **executive summary**.

### **Children's needs - parenting capacity** (December 2011)

This second edition of Children's Needs – Parenting Capacity provides an update on the impact of parental problems, such as substance misuse, domestic violence, learning disability and mental illness, on children's welfare.

The article in Children and Young People Now (10 January 2011) strongly challenged the methodology applied in the distribution of the government's **Early Intervention Grant**. The Local Government Information Unit suggests Graham Allen's suggested holistic approach to



early intervention is clearly the best way of doing it. One of the problems with 20 or 30 separate grants is that you get overlap; at least by putting all these grants together, programmes can be run together with shared management, reducing duplication, but entrepreneurial approaches to leading and managing the process and the outcomes will be required.

Summary progress is available on the [Health Visitor Implementation Plan](#) one year on.

## Shape the future

URGENT responses welcomed to important national consultations:

[Consultation on a Revised Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) \(Learning and Development Requirements\) \(Amendment\) Order 2012](#)

Launch Date: Tuesday 20 December 2011

Closing Date: Thursday 19 January 2012

Between July and September 2011, the Government consulted on a revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework, responding to the recommendations of an independent review by Dame Clare Tickell. This consultation provides a further opportunity to comment on the Government's proposed changes to some parts of the learning and development requirements in the revised EYFS framework: the early learning goals; and the educational programmes. It is also an opportunity to comment on the statutory instrument which gives legal effect to these.

[Call for Evidence for the Independent Review of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications](#)

Leading others requires a firm grasp of qualifications available to develop teams, employees, volunteers or partners. Professor Cathy Nutbrown has been asked by the Minister of State for Children and Families, Sarah Teather MP, to conduct an independent review into qualifications in the early education and childcare sector. Details of this review are set out in the [Terms of Reference](#). As a first step in her review, Professor

Nutbrown would like to hear the views of parents and families, and all those involved in the delivery of early education and childcare. Please help her by responding to the consultation questions as your organisation and in person.

Launch Date: 28 Oct 2011

Closing Date: 24 Jan 2012

## Be aware and watch for

**CORRECTION TO CONSULTATION DOCUMENT:**

**Supporting Families in the Foundation Years:** Proposed Changes to the Entitlement to Free Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency

Paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 of this consultation document have been amended, to correct some technical points on the definition of eligibility for free school meals. The corrections have been published on 9th December 2011.

The Department apologises for any misunderstanding caused. For more information, respondents should please contact [Simon Hampson](#)

**Early Years National Conference 19 June 2012**

Visit GovNet's Early Years 2012 conference for a chance to meet key decision makers and find out about leading frontline foundation years strategies that are achieving real success. This year's speakers include former government adviser and Oxford University senior research fellow Naomi Eisenstadt.

To find out more, [visit the website](#) or email:

[Matthew.Mahabadi@govnet.co.uk](mailto:Matthew.Mahabadi@govnet.co.uk)



Thanks to [Terry Connolly](#) (former Together for Children) for regular updates on Government Policy and national guidance alerts.  
[terry.connolly@mac.com](mailto:terry.connolly@mac.com)

# PRODUCTIVITY



Sue Webster

date	region	venue
Tuesday 6 March 2012	South	The New North Community School and Children's Centre, 32 Popham Road, Islington, London, N1 8SJ
Thursday 8 March 2012	North	Holiday Inn Leeds Garforth, Wakefield Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS25 1LH
Thursday 22 March 2012	Central	IGEM House, High Street, Kegworth, Derbyshire, DE74 2DA



Vicki Lant

## Developing Leadership Potential

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We also offer workforce qualifications for those starting to think about moving into management. The:

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is assessed in the workplace and includes management units that will develop your staff, motivating them to take their next steps towards becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

For more information on all our qualifications - whether you are thinking of your own professional development or looking to up skill your staff – visit [www.cache.org.uk](http://www.cache.org.uk)

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F: 01727 818618  
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St Albans, AL1 5GB

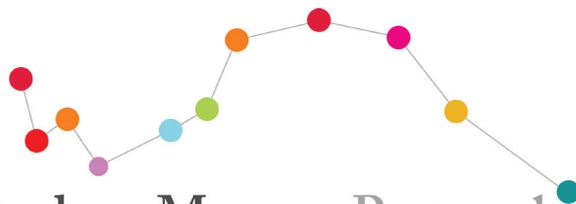


**Are you leading followers or leaders?** Come to one of the Networks and decide! To register your interest in one of the events please email [ccln@nationalcollege.org.uk](mailto:ccln@nationalcollege.org.uk)

Children's Centre Leader Reader in partnership with Andrew Mawson Partnerships offers

## Two Interactive Business Development Workshops with Social Entrepreneur Andrew Mawson, Lord Mawson OBE

28 February 2012 14.00 - 18.00 (apply by noon 13th February)  
or  
20 March 2012 14.00 - 18.00 (apply by noon 5th March)



## Andrew Mawson Partnerships

at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre, St Leonards St, Bromley by Bow, London E3 3BT

To whet your social enterprise appetite before you book, hear Lord Mawson speak about the establishment of the centre and enjoy a visual tour – don't leave it too long!

15 places will be available at each session for collaborative development of your centre's community business ideas. For full details and application process visit [www.ccleaderreader.com](http://www.ccleaderreader.com). Follow up your new year's resolution - think differently!



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**March 2012**

Leading Change