



**army families federation**  
*the voice of the Army community*

# Briefing

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## Funding for Service children under five

AFF believes that funding support should be provided from the Department for Education and MOD for Service children who are under five to help reduce the impact of Service life on their development and wellbeing.

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### Background

Currently, the Government provides funding to support school-aged Service children through schemes such as the MOD Education Support Fund and the Service Pupil Premium as it recognises the impact Service life has on military children. However, provision for Early Years' Service children is not included. LIBOR money has been allocated to assist with childcare infrastructure, but not to directly assist under-fives. In April 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) extended the non-Service Pupil Premium to include three and four year olds via the Early Years Census<sup>1</sup> to build up resources for support; we would like this extension mirrored to include the Service Pupil Premium. We also encourage the MOD to continue existing funding for Service children and to extend this beyond mandatory school age to include the Early Years.

### Evidence

Recent academic and government-funded studies have concluded that this is a gap in funding that needs to be addressed. The impact on life outcomes has been well researched, including:

**Do children who move home and school frequently have poorer educational outcomes in their early years at school?**

*'Our study, which examined the effect of frequent residential and school moves on formal educational attainment within early childhood, demonstrated that even a small number of residential moves may have a detrimental effect on educational attainment.'*<sup>2</sup>

**The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults - Frank Field**

*'... evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life.'*<sup>3</sup>

Early intervention is about tackling problems before they become more difficult to reverse. Belsky and Fearon (2002) observed that sensitive parenting was significantly associated with *'...the parents' mental and physical health and the quality of their support networks.'*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-census>

<sup>2</sup> <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0070601>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/the-foundation-years-preventing-poor-children-becoming-poor-adults>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.eif.org.uk/what-is-early-intervention/>

The DfE has produced an Early Years evidence pack providing more evidence.<sup>5</sup> The quality of pre-school provision is important. ‘.. differences in quality make more of a difference than longer time.’

### Human impact

Children under five need essential support, when necessary, to help them through the complexities of a mobile Army lifestyle. Evidence suggests that very young children can be impacted by change and separation. Smooth transitions between key workers and locations, resources and staff training to help recognise the early signs of stress due to disruption are essential and need financial support.

### AFF View:

AFF believes in equality of support for all Service children, irrespective of age, ensuring a positive and secure future. AFF urges the MOD and DfE to provide targeted funding for supporting younger Service children, to remove the age barrier and to take away any disadvantage in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-evidence-pack>