

## Using ECERS-E alongside FCCERS-R with accredited childminders

- Worcestershire Early Years and Childcare Service

## Why?

### Early Years Outcome Duty

- Improve Outcomes
- Establish consistent concept of 'high quality provision'
- Establish systematic quality improvement process
- Establish continuous cycle of audit and improvement

### Requirements of NEF Code of Practice

- Establish a categorisation process based on quality
- Direct NEF funding towards those that are good or above
- Desire to be consistent across all types of provider, i.e. ECERS-E and ECERS-R with group settings, ECERS-E and FCCERS with accredited childminders

## Monitoring of accredited childminders

- Monitoring of accredited childminders was too time consuming
- Agreed with NCMA to use lighter touch accreditation and monitoring process, and to use FCCERS in place of previous monitoring system
- Mapping of previous process and FCCERS showed gaps, but use of ECERS-E with FCCERS results in comprehensive system.

## Also

- Childminders desire to be recognised as professional early years educators
- Children entitled to best practice which ever type of setting they are in
- Both academic and social development valued
- Quality improvement and reflective practice values in any form

## Preparation

- 8 officers already experienced using ECERS-R and ECERS-E, trained to use FCCERS
- FCCERS books distributed to all childminders in county (around 500), and introduced in workshops at Quality Conference.
- Auditors meet to review ECERS-E for use with accredited childminders (around 50)
- Accredited childminders invited to ECERS-E workshops

## Potential problems identified

- ECERS-E not written for group settings, particularly problematic if scores are compared
- Language not always appropriate e.g. use of word 'staff'
- Number of times something may need to be observed, e.g. children accessing book area, not comparable to group setting
- What would 'areas' look like in a home based setting?
- No moderators trained. Auditing group settings in pairs to support consistency but this considered obtrusive for childminders
- FCCERS looks at all age groups but ECERS-E appropriate for pre-school only. Confusing for auditor
- May be difficult to concentrate on feedback when children present

## Plan in place

- Auditing all accredited childminders (around 50)
- Visit one half day for FCCERS, then again for ECERS-E (if their are 3 and 4 year olds). Keeping separate so easier for auditor
- Audit alone – not so obtrusive (and able to do more audits)
- Language and definitions discussed in detail to support consistency
- Scores not used. Boxes ticked but no score given, therefore simply quality improvement tool
- Decision not to change number of instances
- Feedback when children have gone, usually early evening. Written feedback sheet used to provide 'highlights' and focus, avoiding drawn out verbal feedback

## Our evaluation

- ECERS-E provided useful information and used to support quality improvement
- Language a problem in small number of indicators
- Number of instances not a problem
- Definition of 'area' not a problem once discussed
- Using FCCERS-R and ECERS-E separately less confusing
- Auditing alone less obtrusive so more accurate picture of a normal day, but inconsistency between auditors is an issue
- Written feedback provided focus, therefore avoiding long verbal feedback

## Focus group – 6 accredited childminders and 2 EYCS auditors

### Positive feedback

- Builds confidence – can see a lot of what we do is good practice
- New ideas, suggestions for improvement
- Used to inform Ofsted SEF
- Discussed feedback with parents
- Even if some indicators not felt to be appropriate, use those that are

## However

### Disadvantages raised

- Couldn't be used on its own, safety etc missing
- Language and interpretation can be a problem
- No staff team to discuss with
- Social and emotional development missing
- Some indicators not appropriate if child developmentally delayed, particularly significant when this is the only ¾ year old
- Issues around accessibility
  - Space to provide 'areas'
  - Space to provide variety of equipment and materials
  - Also needs to be appropriate for younger children as rarely caring just for pre-schoolers

## ECERS-E much better received than FCCERS-R !

- Unexpected, particularly as FCCERS-R written for home based childcare and ECERS-E not
- Negative feedback about FCCERS at meetings and on internet blogs
- Problems with FCCERS mainly around accessibility and 'much of the day' - requirements of FCCERS sometimes more difficult to achieve
- Scores not used in ECERS-E, maybe this is a factor
- Accredited childminders all judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding, so their expectations may be high.

## In future

- Further focus group meeting
- Research alternatives to FCCERS and ECERS-E ?
- Support understanding of FCCERS, particularly activities scale and accessibility, and hopefully therefore encourage positivity. We would be grateful for the benefit of your experience!