

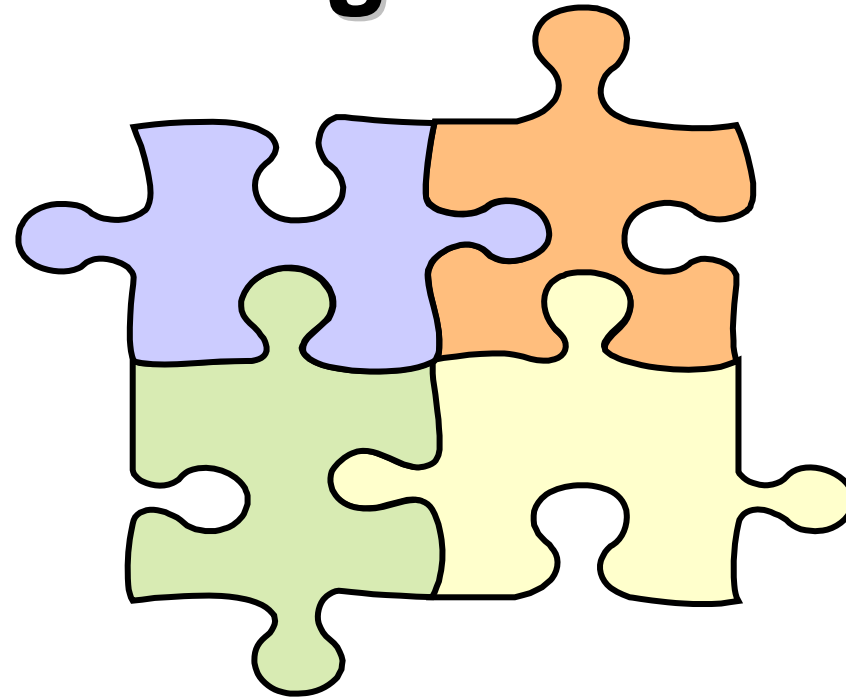
A scenic view of a river flowing through a lush green valley. A stone bridge with three arches crosses the river. The surrounding landscape is filled with green fields and trees under a bright sky.

Derbyshire –  
using ‘The Early  
Childhood  
Environment  
Rating scale’  
(ECERS) to  
improve quality  
and close the  
gap

# **The Derbyshire Education Improvement Service – Early Years**

- The Senior Adviser and Early Years Improvement Service Manager work together as part of one Education Improvement Service
- The Early Years advisory and consultant team (Early Years Improvement Officers and Childcare development officers)
- Joint planning for Service delivery
- Termly planning and review
- A history of high standards of achievement and good relationships with settings and schools

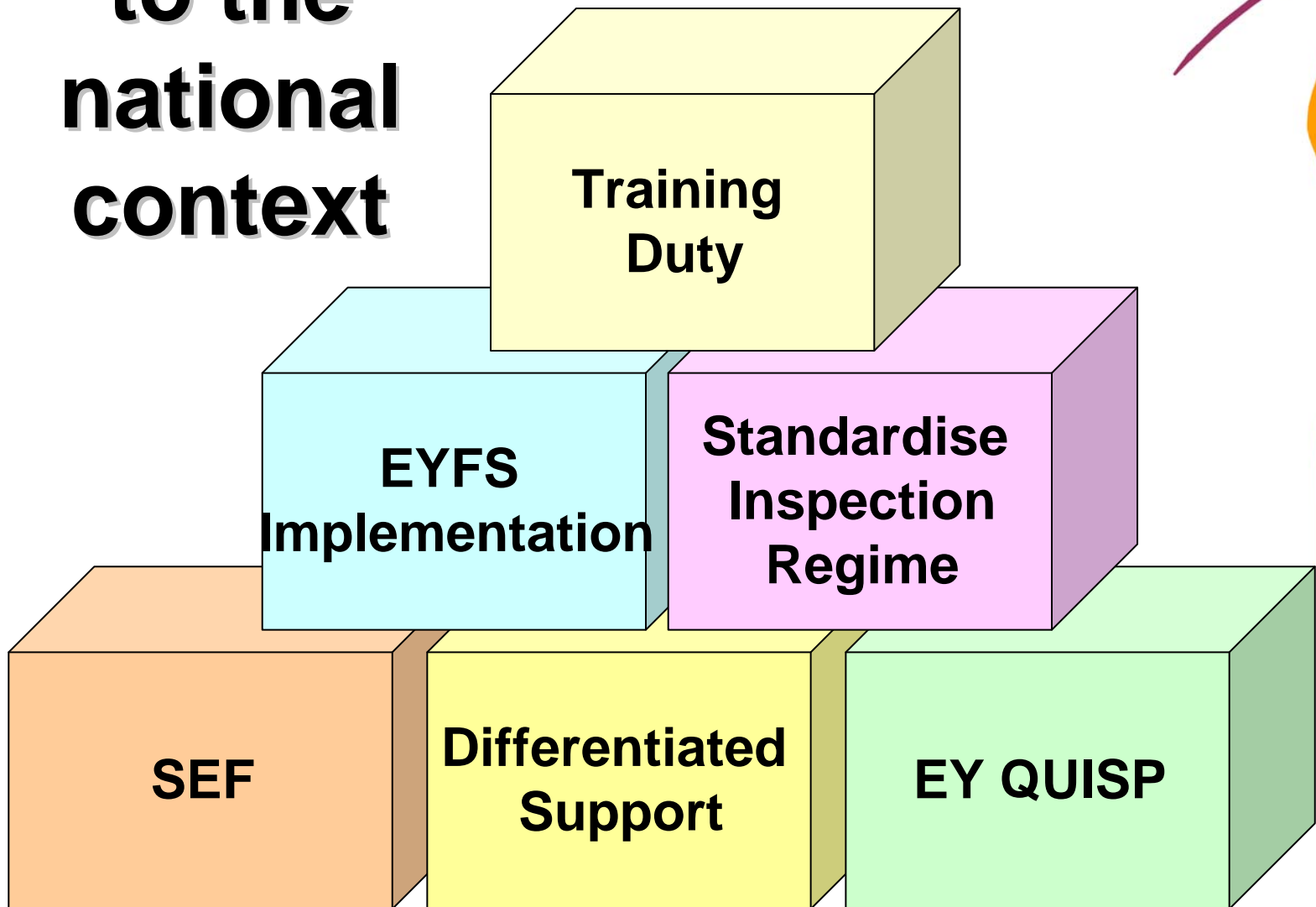
# **Fitting the bits of the jigsaw together**



## **Aligning the work of the Service**

# Contributing to the national context

*Derbyshire County Council  
Children and Younger Adults Department*



We see ECERS as a key tool to support self evaluation and improve quality **if it is done with, not to our settings and schools**



# Who has been trained?

- Early Years Improvement Officers
- Early Years Advisers
- Early Years Consultant  
Headteachers
- Childcare Development Officers

# What do we think ECERS is doing in Derbyshire?

- Providing the Early Years Service with a common language about quality provision
- Providing a transparent and well respected measure to assess quality
- Allowing us to demonstrate improvement in settings
- Providing data which we can evaluate to provide the right training packages and target them effectively

**Above all, develop and support reflective practice in settings**

# **A phased process**

- **Pilot phase** – 25 priority settings and 10 schools (Autumn 08)
- **Phase 1** – 50% of remaining settings including priority settings and schools causing concern in the EYFS (Spring 09 )
- **Phase 2** – all remaining settings and sold to schools as a traded service (Ongoing)



## **The process**

- Leaders and managers of settings and heads/EYFS coordinators of schools are invited to a briefing
- EYIO/Adviser and key staff member complete ECERS audit (ECERS R and ECERS E in schools; ITERS or ECERS R in settings) together

# The process

- EYIO/EY consultant leader and key staff member identify strengths and areas for development together and action plan for improvement
- Setting implements actions to facilitate developments with Early Years Improvement Officer support
- Audit revisited

# **Reliability checks – consistency of judgement**

- Line managers are doing ECERS with Improvement Officers in settings
- A triangulation process in schools between EYFS coordinator, adviser and Early Years Consultant leader

# Early indications of impact: *in settings*

- Taking ownership - alignment of judgements by leaders and managers of settings with Early Years Improvement Officers
- Self identification of priorities and an understanding of the size of the issues ensuring a commonsensical approach to action planning, with the drive to make it happen

# Early indications of impact: *in settings*

- Giving clear focus for improvement in small steps the wording of which can be directly inputted into the SEF as 'next steps'
- Supporting development of training focus

# Areas for improvement *in settings*

- Maths Areas and provision especially writing numbers
- Science resources and natural materials
- Toileting
- Variety and use of books and pictures
- Using language to develop reasoning
- Interaction of staff with children
- Meals and snack and engagement of the adult

# Early indications of impact: *in schools*

- Joint working enabled head teachers to have a clear view of provision and practice anchored in ECERS statements and not subjective or just a gut feeling
- The summary of findings is non negotiable because of the rigour of the process
- It contributed to a judgement of the quality of teaching in one school and was used to support discussion around this

# Early indications of impact: *in schools*

- Action planning following audit has ensured focused and accurate priorities identified and can also see “how” to achieve objectives, not just “what” to achieve
- A lot of quick fixes are identified easily and can be addressed easily and quickly which promotes self esteem and confidence
- Some emerging evidence of impact on Ofsted outcomes



# Areas for improvement *in schools:*

- Maths Areas and provision especially writing numbers
- Science resources and natural materials
- Multi cultural books, puzzles posters, artefacts
- Interaction of staff with children
- Use of book areas/ adults reading with children
- Accessibility of resources to aid independent learning

# What next?

- Evaluate Pilot ECERS implementation in settings
- Weave ECERS into differentiated support criteria for settings
- Complete ECERS training for all EY officers and selected EYPS and EYCL Heads
- Follow out action plans in identified schools and settings

# What next?

- Use the 4 ECERS trained outstanding Nursery Headteachers to act in a consultancy capacity with satisfactory nursery classes (Summer 2009)
- Start to collect and analyse data
- Set up a formal ECERS moderation process