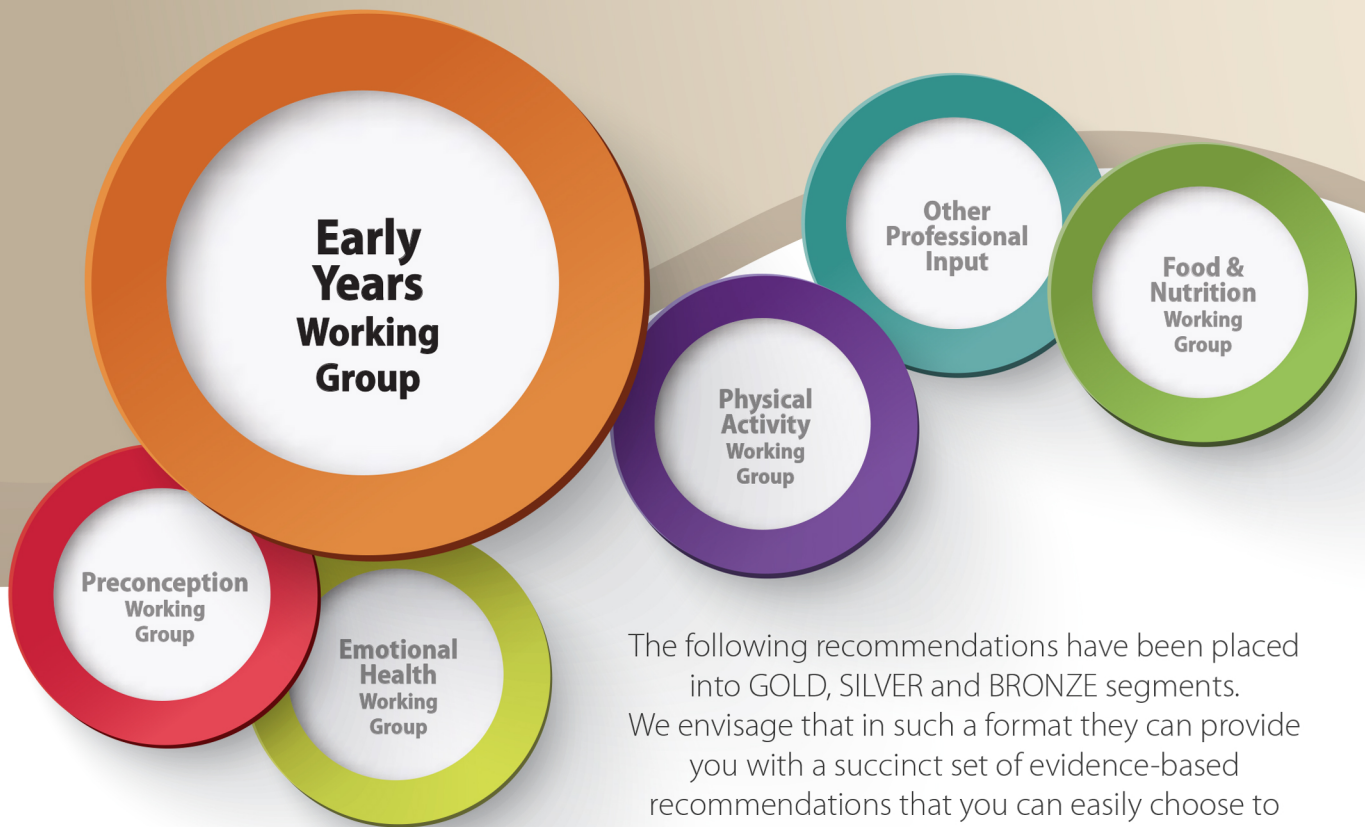


Recommendations for the Mental Health Prevention Review



The following recommendations have been placed into GOLD, SILVER and BRONZE segments. We envisage that in such a format they can provide you with a succinct set of evidence-based recommendations that you can easily choose to have more details/evidence presented to you.

The GOLD recommendations indicate the best evidenced based options, though they may be the more expensive choices.

The SILVER recommendations are still important but are either cheaper, or they would need less overall change. The SILVER options are also often 'steps to the GOLD recommendations.'

Finally, we have the BRONZE recommendations that may have a lower to no significant associated costs but would still assist in promoting a healthier society and play a part in steps to the SILVER or GOLD recommendations.

These recommendations are brought to you by forty plus professionals with expertise in the Early Years and coincides with the release of our publication on PLAY :

'A Creative Britain Starts with a Playful Childhood.'



The re-introduction of an English

Play Strategy: In 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (then Ed Balls MP) with the Secretary of State for

Culture, Media and Sport, published the first national play strategy for England, backed by the children's plan investment of £235 million (worth £370 million in today's prices). This investment was used to make sure that every residential area had a variety of high-quality places for all children to play safely, and free of charge. Such an ambitious plan would help to create a society that is creative, physically more active and assist in social & emotional well-being.

The re-introduction of Sure Starts or Equivalent: The institute for Fiscal Studies showed that by studying rates of mental and physical hospital admissions (up to 2021), the poorest preschool children in Sure Start areas had made the greatest gains in health, right into their teens. Prevention is cheaper and better than cure. A children's centre is more than a location for doing things for families. It also a micro-neighbourhood where they – and the staff – do things for each other. As the former shadow Early Years Minister Kate Green put it in 2021, "those mums that got to know one another at Sure Start are still the bedrock of our community". Currently the combined budget for assistance by the current government is around £300 million which compares to the Sure Start budget in 2010, that at inflation would be £2.6 Billion. It may not be feasible to allocate such funding presently, but longer term, this should be a key goal of the Labour party in any new government.

UK Government to commit to a Baby and Toddler Guarantee: *It takes a community to raise a child.* Children, their parents and families need a whole community of services to grow up happy and healthy, and it's the ease of such access and availability that can support babies and toddlers grow up to become healthy and emotionally resilient adults. That is why it is so important that the next government commit to a Baby and Toddler Guarantee thus ensuring that the rights of all the youngest citizens are met, and future generations are able to reach their full potential.
https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EarlyMomentsMatter_UNICEFUK_2022_PolicyReport.pdf.

Informing a Wider Community in regard the Benefits of Play: The development of an online Parent Club - Such a club could centrally highlight the best contributions from local communities, such as professionals to professionals and professionals with parents/carers. This would aid families to become involved in Play, ensuring children have a range of play interactions in a multitude of environments. This would be especially important after the effects after the COVID lockdown years.

A Graduate in every Early Years setting: Create a workforce strategy to include graduates in every early years setting, starting with those in areas of greatest deprivation, and those working with under threes <https://early-education.org.uk/how-do-we-increase-the-graduate-workforce-in-early-years>.

Play made available for all Families: Increasingly families have little access to areas in which 'free play' can occur. The delivery of open access play, mental health community spaces/services for parents, children and young people in each community, connecting to the widening of Family Hubs/reintroduction of Sure Starts would great help with emotional literacy and resilience from the outset of young people's lives.

SILVER OPTION 2

Playing Out, Street Play: Examine and initialise in England a similar initiative to that currently occurring in Scotland, that allows generous opportunities for street play to occur. This is aligned with Playing Out <https://playingout.net/why/the-problem/>. It is termed 'Doorstep Play' whereby children are able to access local authority funds for their community to build safe and secure green spaces for all the local communities to utilise (rather than it being a postcode lottery to accessibility).

Play from Birth, The Red Book: The online red book given to parents/carers when they have a child should have an interactive approach to home play and schematic play, with film shorts to highlight 'everyday play opportunities' within care giving approaches, linking to health, wellbeing, bonding and attachment, alongside the developmental play lens currently included.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/height-weight-and-reviews/baby-reviews/>

Play Opportunities Supported by Funds: Increased funding to widen play programmes, with a focus on the infants and play with their parents alongside sessions aimed at parents with children in current Family Hub settings

BRONZE OPTION 3

Opportunities for Play in the Community: For children as they grow to have access to spaces that are age appropriate across communities and Preduce play labelled as 'No Ball Games' as if they were taking part in anti-social behaviour.

PSHE/Science Lessons: Provision of a dedicated programme alongside sex education that discusses/teaches cultural and societal issues on preception care, child development, importance of play (for all children) as a core subject within secondary education PSHE/Science lessons. This would also include a mandatory emotional learning and mental health curriculum starting from the early years.

Applied for Community Funds: Provision for funding pots for community groups etc to develop inclusive initiatives such as baby signing, sensory, infant massage etc.