

# The UK Early Years landscape, including for creative expressive arts

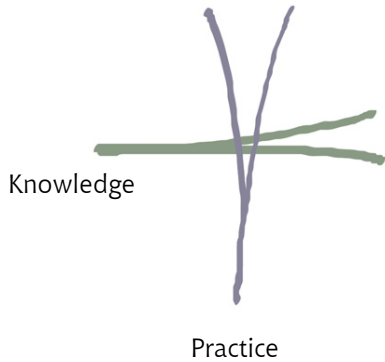
## Quality

**How would you represent the diversity of quality of practice?**

You could represent quality of practice as a two-axis quadrant graph (see picture) with Knowledge/Experience on one axis, and Practice/skills on the other.

Three key points for improving practice:

- 'Learn the language, not the songs', in other words practitioners need to understand fundamental things like how children develop and how their creativity and arts practice can be developed, rather than learning large collections of exercises, activities and songs
- Learning facilitation and reflective practice can be more important than learning teaching techniques and large volumes of knowledge
- Co-working between and EY professionals and artists is a vital way of blending skills and understanding



## Key national policies

**What are the key national policies in place?**

- Childcare commission changing childcare ratios
- Childcare for 2-year-olds: will be difficult for many settings to provide for
- Revised EYFS: a good framework but, with less prescription, there's a risk of more divide between good and weak practice on the ground
- Qualifications review: new 'Early Years Educators'
- Early Years Learning vs. Childcare: a prevailing political sentiment about social mobility and getting women into work, rather than the development of young people
- New workforce qualifications: Level 4 Qualified Music educator; L3 Creative Cultural Practitioner; L6 Diploma in Dance Teaching and Learning; Early Years Educators



## Funding and resourcing

**What is the reality in terms of funding and resourcing, good and bad?**

- Workforce (as a resource): generally underskilled, with mixed availability and quality of CPD, and CPD undervalued
- Funding: little to no early years arts funding; no Music Education Hub m
- Technology presents a significant resource: with resources online (many for music, few for dance) and through smart devices (iPhones, iPads, Kindles etc.)
- Settings as a resource: to generalise, there tends to be more creative arts practice in private, voluntary and independent settings, and less in the state sector

## Regional / local strengths and weaknesses

**What are the key factors leading to strength and weakness at the local/regional level?**

- Parental engagement
- Staff turnover in settings
- Strategic creative leadership and leaders valuing arts and culture
- Taking ownership of nurturing creativity and understanding how to do it
- One-off activities versus sustained, embedded and empowered cultures
- Funding and resourcing
- Initial training for early years workforce
- Utilisation and under-utilisation of Children's Centres
- Access to skills, equipment and spaces