

COMPETENCES AND STANDARDS: WHY DO WE NEED THEM FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE?

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Dr. Karen Whittaker, *BN, MSc, PGCE, PhD, iHV Fellow*, leads the Child and Family Health research theme group; SEaRCH, (Supporting Evaluation and Research in Child and family Health) School of Nursing, UCLan. She has experience in realist evaluation methods, service user involvement and public health nursing, with a particular interest in improving accessibility to universal child and family health services. As a registered health visitor (Public Health Nurse) she has previously delivered community well child health services.

Since, she has managed a number of research studies, completing post-doctoral work at King's College London as part of a team delivering a programme of research commissioned alongside the expansion of the Health Visitor workforce in England (2011 – 2013). In 2013, she established and co-facilitates the North of England Health Visitor and Child Health Research Network @research_hvch and has worked with the UNICEF Technical Advisory Group on Home Visiting, writing learning modules on home visiting and practice supervision. Currently, Karen is the principal investigator for the local evaluation of ChatHealth – a confidential SMS text messaging service for young people to contact school nursing services. She is a co-investigator on the E-SEE (Enhancing Social-Emotional Health and Wellbeing in the Years) trial, led by Professor Tracy Bywater at York University. E-SEE is a community based RCT and economic evaluation of a universal progressive service model delivering the Incredible Years Infant and Toddler (0-2) Parenting Programmes. (<http://e-see-trial.org/>)

As an extension of the E-SEE study Karen will be leading an evaluation of fathers' experiences of parenting support; the Fitting Fathers In project. This work is being supported by a 2018 bursary (the MacQueen Award) from the Education and Development Trust of the UK Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association.