



**The Michael Sieff Foundation**  
Working together for children's welfare

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release Monday 8 February 2010

### **Making investment in early years count**

Tomorrow, Tuesday 9 February 2010, NCB and the Michael Sieff Foundation are holding a Parliamentary Seminar – '*Early Childhood Education & Care: Making Investment Count*', hosted by the Earl of Listowel, at the House of Lords.

The event is part of NCB's Firm Foundations campaign which seeks to promote the need for quality and investment in early years services, and to communicate the evidence of the benefits that such services bring to both children and our communities.

The partnership between NCB and the Michael Sieff Foundation was established following the recognition by both organisations of the importance of top quality early years provision.

The seminar will bring together policymakers, academics, representatives of parenting organisations and practitioners to debate the key issues around early years investment, and the costs and benefits of good quality early years provision under the Early Years Foundation Stage quality framework.

The event will be chaired by Netmums Director, Sally Russell, with contributions from:

- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People & Families, Baroness Delyth Morgan
- Shadow Minister for the Family, Maria Miller MP
- Annette Brooke MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Children, Young People and Families
- Professor Christine Pascal, Director of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood
- Jody Aked, Researcher at the Centre for Well-being, nef.

**Sir Paul Ennals, Chief Executive, NCB, said:** 'Investment in high quality services for our youngest children is critical because of the long-term life benefits it brings. These benefits are not only to individual children and families but to society as a whole. NCB has long championed the needs of young children, and supported practitioners working with them on the ground. Today we are bringing representatives from across the sector together in partnership with the Michael Sieff Foundation to discuss ways forward for early years services, and to highlight the importance of our 'Firm Foundations' campaign'



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**Lord Listowel, said:** 'As Treasurer of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children, and a trustee of the Michael Sieff Foundation, I am proud to host today's event. Research shows that children at risk of social exclusion do best at the end of primary school if they have had good preschool care. Yet early years workers continue to play the role of 'Cinderella' with low pay and status. I applaud the work of NCB and the Sieff Foundation in seeking to remedy this lamentable and avoidable failure to give our children the best start in life.'

As part of its conference programme, The Michael Sieff Foundation is currently focusing on the childhood developmental process, starting with the early years. The report of the Foundation's Annual Conference 2009, which focused on three to five year olds, will be released at today's event.

The Firm Foundations campaign wants:

- High quality early years education and care for all young children
- Parents, families and early years professionals working in partnership for the benefit of young children
- Consolidation and continued improvement in recent early years developments
- Greater investment in early years education and care to reduce inequality and tackle disadvantage
- A good quality early years workforce through improving training, pay and conditions.

Please help spread the message by signing up on our campaign website, where you can find more information on how to take action: [www.firmfoundationscampaign.org.uk](http://www.firmfoundationscampaign.org.uk)

**-ENDS-**

**Notes for Editors:**

1. The Firm Foundations campaign is supported by the Early Childhood Forum, based at NCB, which brings together 59 membership organisations working with, and for young children and their families.
2. The Early Childhood Unit (ECU) at NCB works to encourage discussion and debate amongst those who are involved with children from birth to eight. The ECU also services several related networks including the Early Childhood Forum (ECF), the Local Authority Early Years Network (LAEYN) and National Quality Improvement Network (NQIN). For more information, please visit [www.earlychildhood.org.uk](http://www.earlychildhood.org.uk) or call 020 7843 6064.



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3. NCB mission is to advance the well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives. As a membership and infrastructure support agency for the children's sector in England and Northern Ireland, NCB provides essential information on policy, research and best practice for our members and the members of our wide range of partnership bodies, which operate under our charitable status and are based in our London headquarters. For further information visit [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)
4. The Michael Sieff Foundation, established in 1987, is dedicated to improving policy and practice for children and young people in need. The Foundation runs a conference programme with the interlinking objectives of the prevention of child abuse, the prevention of mental health problems in children and the prevention of offending by children. For further information visit [www.michaelsieff-foundation.org.uk](http://www.michaelsieff-foundation.org.uk)
5. NCB is supporting 4Children's 'shout out for a sure start' campaign. The campaign has been set up to celebrate and promote the value that Sure Start children's centres bring to communities by supporting families and helping to give children the best start in life. For more information, contact [Julie.Evans@4Children.org.uk](mailto:Julie.Evans@4Children.org.uk) or call 020 7522 6928 / 07917870641.

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