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Response to Getting the right start: National Service Framework for Children

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging findings relating to the National Service Framework (NSF) for Children.

We have funded long-standing programmes of work on children and young people, disabled children, people with disabilities more generally, and poverty and disadvantage. Some of our work has already fed into the development of the NSF through our support of the expert working group on disabled children. Therefore, our response to this document draws on other areas of our work that we felt would be relevant to the further development of the NSF.

A key over-arching finding - important in contextualising the NSF- is that poverty and disadvantage in childhood is a key determinant of future mental health for children and young people. Work we have published drawing on data from the National Children Development study - tracking the lives of 17,000 people from birth to age 33 - concluded that the tendency toward adult depression and other physiological problems is more strongly associated with social deprivation or experiences of care during childhood than with family-type or other factors. Socially deprived families were defined as those on low incomes with inadequate housing. ([JRF Findings Ref SPR125](#) July 1997 - *The long-term effects for children of different parental backgrounds*)

We noted that, with the exception of the Forward, there is little reference to parents in the document. Although we recognise that this document focuses on support for children, and that parenting and family debates are not a primary concern, work we have supported around issues relating to disabled parents, brings to the forefront the importance of getting the inter-relationship between adult services and children services right. Michele Wates of the Disabled Parents' Network sent a detailed response to the National Service Framework on behalf of the Foundation, in which she made a cogent argument for greater clarity about the inter-relationship between adult and children services throughout the document.