

# Biographies and Abstracts

## Keynote Speech

### Prof. Helen PENN

Professor Helen Penn is a Professor Emerita in the Cass School of Education and Communities of the University of East London and a Visiting Professor in the Institute of Education at the University College London. She has had a long career in early childhood care and education, beginning as an infant teacher, becoming a manager of services, and then a researcher and a professor of early childhood.

She has always been concerned that vulnerable children should be especially well cared for and educated and that mainstream services should be sensitive and flexible enough to provide for them. She has carried out her work in many countries for a variety of organizations including Save the Children, UNICEF, UNESCO and for the EU and OECD.

She has published many articles and books. One of her most recent books "Quality in Early Childhood Services: An International Perspective" has been translated into Chinese and will be available at the end of 2016.



## **Title**

*International Trends in Child Care Policy, with Special Reference to Children under Two*

## **Abstract**

This lecture will focus on two trends. The first is the rising number of mothers of young children in the workforce. This has led to an increased, and world-wide demand for child care services, especially for children aged two and under, who are not normally eligible for kindergarten or nursery school. The EU for example now recommends that there should be child care places for at least 35% of children under three. Child care services for young children are expensive to provide so by default, in many countries, most of the increases in provision for this age group have been in the private sector. Governments have tended to limit their contribution to some kind of tax relief, or as in Hong Kong, the offer of vouchers. There is some international concern about the quality of the private sector, and their recruitment of lower qualified staff at low rates of pay, as well as about the affordability of private services for low-income parents.

The second trend concerns the integration and co-ordination of all services to young children under school age. The OECD, the EU, and most recently the World Bank, have all stressed the importance of a systemic approach to the development of services, covering all aspects of care and education. Fragmented services to young children are hard for parents to negotiate, as well as being an inefficient use of resources.