

Press release – embargoed until 00.00hrs 24th January 2025

24th January 2025

International Day of Education¹ - Opening Doors to a Bright Future

Today the focus is on highlighting the need for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, recognising the increasing importance of digital learning, home education and access to education for children with specific needs.

The day serves as a reminder of the educational disparities that still exist across the world, as well as across the UK.

Early years child care provision and a holistic approach to children's education is crucially important from birth enabling brain, cognitive, language and social development, as well as attainment of future educational outcomes affecting life chances.

While the majority of children across the UK attend formal education from around 5 years of age at primary and secondary schools, a recent BBC investigation highlighted an increasing number of children are being home educated². The latter may be due to a choice made by parents or that children are unable to access educational environments locally that are able to meet their specific needs. Many parents increasingly report that there are significant difficulties in accessing appropriate education for children and young people with special educational needs³.

Many families are however choosing home education today as a result of their child's mental health. Access to support and care from nurses who have the right knowledge, skills and competencies to meet the health needs of children and young people, whether at home, school or other settings is vitally important.

The ABPN believes that

- Every child has a right to access high quality education, reflective of their individual needs which will help maximise their full potential.^{4,5}

¹ Oxford Dictionary defines education as a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools, colleges or universities, to improve knowledge and develop skills.

² See BBC investigation - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cg3382380vko>

³ See Revealed: The full scale of Labour's SEND challenge <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-the-full-scale-of-labours-send-challenge/>

⁴ See ABPN Position statement on Children and Young People's rights [abpn_position_statement_children_and_young_peoples_rights.pdf](#) and ABPN Background briefing on Children and Young People's Rights [abpn_background_briefing_children_and_young_people.pdf](#)

⁵ UN Declaration of Human Rights 1948 see <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>

- Infants, children and young people should receive care from nurses that have the child specific knowledge, skills and competencies to meet their unique needs in age-appropriate facilities, at home or closer to home in community and general practice settings⁶
- Child field specific pre-registration undergraduate education programmes, as well as specific post registration education is crucial to equip nurses to meet the needs of children and young people across all settings, including at home or closer to home in community and general practice settings

“Education is key to children’s futures. Education affects the life chances of the child and access or lack of access to education opens up or limits opportunities. Access to education can be limited in many ways and globally it is often girls who have the least access. Currently it is estimated that, globally, 130 million girls are not in school⁷. Malala Yousafzai whose fight on behalf of girls and their right to learn resulted in her becoming the youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate notes that “one child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world.”

Professor Bernie Carter, President

Notes for editors

The term child refers to infants, children, young people and young adults up to 25 years of age

The ABPN recognises that primary and community services, as well as child public health and mental health services, including school nurses and health visitors also have a key role in supporting children, young people and families.

The ABPN is a network of children’s nurses with a wide membership of experts in clinical practice, education, leadership and research. It is the oldest children’s nursing association in the world, established in 1938.

www.abpn-uk.com

X (formerly Twitter): @ABPN_ChildNurse

Facebook: Association of British Paediatric Nurses

Tik Tok: @ABPN_ChildNurse

YouTube: @ABPN_ChildNurse

⁶ See ABPN Background briefing on Workforce and staffing (**ADD link**) and ABPN Position statements on safe nurse staffing (**ADD LINKS**)

⁷ <https://malala.org/malalas-story>