
Abstract

In England over the period 2004–2010 there was significant change in the education and training for those working with children and young people to meet policy objectives. This article aims to briefly outline some of the impacts for ‘associate professionals’ who were working in educational settings during this period, and to discuss how these changes may influence their professional status in the longer term. In addition, the article seeks to draw attention to the ways in which policy can reinforce or undermine workforce professionalism, and the variable resources that professions may have to manage these processes. The intention is to provide an insight into processes in one European country that may be of interest to other countries where reform to the organisation of care and education for children may be in development, for example through the development of pre-school infrastructure to meet policy and labour market objectives (i.e. ‘Program MALUCH’ in Poland), as outlined by the Polish Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2011).

Key words: professionalism, education policy, workforce development.

Introduction: Policy, professionalism and workforce remodelling

There was substantial policy driven intervention which aimed to reshape the practice of those working with children and young people over the period 2004–2010 in England, with key policy set out in the Children’s Workforce Strategy (HM Government 2005a) as part of the Every Child Matters agenda, which aimed