



Bambini in Europa
Barn i Europa
Børn i Europa
Children in Europe
Copii în Europa
Dzieci w Europie
Enfants d'Europe
Infância a Europa
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Infância na Europa
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Παιδιά στην Ευρώπη

Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

EMBARGO TO 21 MARCH

Media Release

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Learning together

Children in Europe shows services from birth benefit all children and parents

Strong integrated services from birth support the development of parenting skills and give even the youngest children the social, emotional and educational benefits of learning from their peers, says new research from Italy and Finland in the latest issue of the award-winning Children in Europe magazine, published on 21 March.

Most countries put far fewer resources into services for the youngest children than other age groups, but in ***Europe's youngest citizens: services and leave provision for under threes*** researchers and practitioners across Europe, including Scotland, Sweden, Portugal and Denmark, show high quality fully integrated education and care systems and a well qualified workforce contribute significantly to building better experiences for all children and their families.

European Structural Funds can help fund early years provision, says Nora Milotay, Policy Officer for the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, in an exclusive interview following the publication of the Commission's first Communication on early childhood education and care.

Bronwen Cohen, editor-in-chief, said: "This Communication is the first time the European Commission Education Directorate has gone down the age range to consider services providing education and care for children from birth, and it comes out strongly in favour not only of integrated services, but also a universal approach rather than targeting resources. This issue of Children in Europe is particularly relevant at a time when families are facing the double whammy of pressure on services and pressure on income."

John Butcher, head of inclusion for Glasgow City Council Education Services and a contributor to the magazine, said:

"Glasgow's Early Childhood and Extended Services strategy began with the vision to give all the city's children the best possible start in life, with access to high quality education and affordable childcare. We in Scotland can learn from other countries' charging policies and their integrated approach to education and childcare, and the new EC Communication will offer a helpful framework to encourage a more coherent approach at a national level."

Stig Lund, special adviser at Danish educators' union BUPL and a contributor to the magazine, said:

“The single most important element for quality in the lives of infants and toddlers in relation to services is the quality of staff and their competences. This becomes more crucial the younger the children are, as they rely on the capacity and sensitiveness of staff to ‘listen’ to gestures, expressions and sounds of small children. This demands theoretical and practical professional knowledge, and requires high qualification standards among staff.”

To order a copy of Children in Europe telephone 0131 222 2400 or visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/publications

**For further information contact Tracey Francis
Email tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk / tel 0131 222 2419**

Notes for Editors

1. In February the European Commission published its first Communication on early childhood education and care, extending its guidance down the age range to birth for the first time. It offers proposals for areas of collaboration at EU level that will be discussed by education ministers from all EU member states in May.

2. A conference will take place on 6 June in New Lanark, in the 18th century the site of the world's first integrated early childhood education and care service, exploring themes raised within this issue of Children in Europe.

3. **Children in Europe:** Children in Europe is a magazine for everyone working with and for children from 0 to 10 and those interested in children's issues. It is published simultaneously in 15 languages and 17 countries by a network of national magazines across Europe. It aims to provide a forum for ideas, practice and information and to contribute to the development of policy and practice at European and national levels. It is published in the UK and Ireland by Children in Scotland. In 2010 it received an award from the Italian chapter of the European Publishing Forum.

4. Children in Europe Issue 20, ***Europe's youngest citizens: services and leave provision for under threes***, is published on **21 March 2011**. For more information visit www.childrenineurope.org

4. **Children in Scotland** is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provision are of the best possible quality and able to meet the demands of a diverse society. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk