

# Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

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## Media Statement

9/03/2011

### **Children in Scotland urges Scottish political leaders to work with Europe on early childhood strategy**

Children in Scotland Chief Executive, Bronwen Cohen, has written to Mike Russell, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, urging him to support the European Commission's proposals, outlined in its recent Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care, which will be discussed at a meeting of EU Education Ministers, taking place in Brussels in May.

In her letter, Dr. Cohen notes the emphasis that the Communication places on an "an integrated, universalist approach" to early education and care, and asks Mr Russell if he will support the Commission's proposals for the launch of "an Open Method of Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care", which would enable research and policy and practice development exchange across the EU. The letter also asks for support over the suggested "potential for the use of the EU Structural Funds in developing appropriate models", also proposed by the Commission.

The letter concludes, "It would be helpful to know if the Scottish Government, either by a direct presence or through the representation of UK Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, will be supporting the Commission's proposals.

Dr. Cohen has also written to leaders of the Scottish opposition parties, asking for their support over the Communication.

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. *Early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow* was published in Brussels. EC Communications are not legally binding, but provide guidelines for member states and support in delivering objectives.
2. EU Structural Funds are financial tools set up to reduce disparities in income, wealth and opportunities across Europe. All European regions are eligible to apply.

3. Children in Scotland's recent report *The Costs of Childcare in Scotland* looks at the impact on early years services of a rising birth rate, falling numbers of preschool centres and a reduction in the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Copies of the report are available from the Children in Scotland website.
4. *Working for Inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*, led by Children in Scotland, considered Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) systems, particularly the ECEC workforce, at local, national and European levels. The programme's final report, *Working for Inclusion: how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe's youngest citizens*, is available from Children in Scotland.
5. **Children in Scotland** is the longstanding national agency for the whole of the children's sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit [www.childreninScotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk).

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