

Media Release

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Joining the Risk Debate Parents to quiz Parliamentary panel on play

Amid debate about the impact of our risk-averse society on children's wellbeing and development – and suggestions that some safety measures may even breach children's rights – parents, carers and practitioners will have a chance to question a panel of MSPs and play experts at the Scottish Parliament on 3 November.

Play Scotland is presenting the Parliamentary Question Time in conjunction with Children in Scotland as part of the Play and Risk Debate, arising from the action plan for the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework. Feedback from the event will be taken forward by the Play and Risk Debate Group, convened by the Government and chaired by Marguerite Hunter Blair, chief executive of Play Scotland.

Panellists are MSPs Christina McKelvie (SNP), John Scott (Conservative), Ken MacIntosh (Labour), Robert Brown (Liberal Democrat) and Robin Harper (Green Party), and play expert and author Sue Palmer.

Speaking ahead of the event, Sue Palmer said: "Children *need* to play – especially outdoors. It's how they develop self-confidence, resilience, resourcefulness and countless other vital human characteristics (not least common sense). Scientists now tell us that play is as important for their all-round development as food or sleep. So we can't afford to 'battery-raise' the next generation of Scottish children. If they're to grow into healthy, resilient, responsible citizens, we have to unravel our current cottonwool culture, and welcome them back where they're meant to be – out to play."

Notes to Editors

1. *Risk Debate: Parliamentary Question Time* is taking place at the Scottish Parliament on 3 November 2010 from 1.00 to 2.15 pm. For security reasons, please notify Sharon Forester by 4.00 pm on Tuesday 2 November if you wish to attend: call 0131 440 9070 or email SharonForester@playscotland.org.
2. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states children have a right to: "...rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts..."
3. **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.

4. **Play Scotland** was formed in 1998 to make the child's right to play, underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a reality in Scotland. Its mission is to increase awareness of the importance of play to the development of children and young people in Scotland; and to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland have equal access to diverse and quality play opportunities that meet their individual need. Its priorities are lobbying for a play policy and a strategic approach to play in Scotland; developing resources to support the play sector; workforce development of the playwork sector; and research into play provision. For further information visit www.playscotland.org.

For further information contact Tracey Francis at tfrancis@childreninscotland.org.uk or on 0131 222 2419