

## Media Release

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### **Smoothing the way for parents Helping parents of children with additional support needs get involved in decision making and learning**

How parents, carers and the wider community can make sure children with additional support needs receive the right support is the theme of *Families as Learning Partners*, the annual conference being run by Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, in Hamilton on 9 March.

Parents have the right to involvement under additional support for learning legislation and the conference, which is supported by South Lanarkshire Council, looks at what support makes this involvement work well and celebrates innovative programmes that are addressing this across Scotland.

The keynote speaker will be Maggie Tierney, Deputy Director of the Scottish government's Support for Learning division, and workshops will focus on the challenges of supporting parental involvement among parents who have support needs themselves; among mobile families within Scotland's Travelling communities; among looked after children; and for kinship carers. The conference will also hear first-hand experiences from parents and young people.

Lorraine Sanda, National Parental Involvement Coordinator with the Scottish government and Chair of the conference, said:

"The best for children can only be achieved when parents are positively encouraged to play an active part in all decisions affecting their children's education. This is so important when children need any extra help for any reason. We have to continue to find ways to work together to improve communication and relationships. Enquire's role in supporting parents and professionals in this is vitally important. This Conference offers an important opportunity for us to reflect on how parents can be better involved and how we can work together to make things better for more children, young people and their families."

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. *Families as Learning Partners* is run by Enquire with the support of South Lanarkshire Council at the Banqueting Hall, South Lanarkshire Council Offices in Hamilton on Tuesday 9 March 2010.
2. Parental rights are a key strand of the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004. The Act was amended in 2009, strengthening the rights of parents and linking with the 2006 Parental Involvement legislation, which places duties on schools to involve parents wherever possible.

3. Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning managed by Children in Scotland and funded by the Scottish government. The service offers advice and information through a national helpline, written responses to emails and its website. It also offers training and talks and produces a range of publications. For more information visit [www.Enquire.org.uk](http://www.Enquire.org.uk).
4. The need for, and right to, additional support for learning can be triggered by a wide range of circumstances, including (but not limited to): physical disability; young carers' responsibilities; behavioural difficulties; the needs of looked-after children; problems at home; social or emotional difficulties; or whatever other learning difficulties keep children from succeeding in school.
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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