

Media Release

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Inspiring and transforming young lives New publication celebrates children and the arts

Access to the arts shouldn't be an add-on for children but should influence the whole children's sector, according to a new publication, *Picture this: celebrating children and the arts*, being sent free of charge this week to every local authority preschool and primary school in Scotland.

How arts education in Scotland is faring in 2010, where the arts fit into the Scottish Government's vision for children and how the children's sector workforce can be equipped to improve access to the arts are among topics covered by a range of experts, policymakers and practitioners including Joan Parr, head of education for the Scottish Arts Council; Keith Brown, Minister for Schools and Skills; Bernard McLeary, chief executive of Learning and Teaching Scotland; and Simon Sharkey, Associate Director: Learn at the National Theatre of Scotland.

Published by Children in Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council, *Picture this: celebrating children and the arts* links encouraging children's creativity today with developing tomorrow's innovative thinkers, and shows how the arts can contribute significantly to children and young people's lives by raising aspirations and confidence; improving skills; removing social inequalities; and improving health and wellbeing.

Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop said:

"We know that great benefit results from exposure to arts and culture from an early age and throughout our lives. That is why we should take every opportunity to increase young people's access to and participation in cultural activities. Resources like this are vital to ensuring schools and other organisations have the right tools to help them create such opportunities and to release the creativity among Scotland's young people."

Joan Parr, Head of Education and Lifelong Learning at the Scottish Arts Council, said: "The Scottish Arts Council is dedicated to placing the arts, culture, and creativity at the heart of learning. By considering arts and education in the wider context of child development, this publication describes the current landscape and provides a valuable resource to help ensure that Scottish children can develop the skills and enjoyment that are implicit in engaging with the arts."

Notes to Editors

1. *Picture this: celebrating children and the arts* is available from Children in Scotland, price £6. To place an order call 0131 228 8484 or visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk.

2. Access to the arts should be a right and not a privilege, a panel of senior practitioners concluded at Children in Scotland's annual conference in November. The panel, comprising Director of Glasgow School of Art Seona Reid, Chief Executive of Scottish Youth Theatre Mary McClusky, Director General of the National Galleries of Scotland John Leighton and Composer Jennifer Martin, called for a more strategic approach to partnerships and increased collaboration between organisations.
3. On 15 December Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop and Minister for Schools and Skills Keith Brown hosted a seminar for representatives of the cultural and education sectors to explore new ways of bringing more culture and creativity into the curriculum. A report of the seminar is being produced, to be followed by an action plan. For further information contact Ross Proctor on 0131 244 2682.
4. **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.