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every child - every childhood



## Media Release

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### **From place-based learning to economic regeneration – why a sense of place matters**

Economic development in both rural and urban communities can be helped by rooting service provision in local cultures and tailoring services to local needs, a major conference in Inverness today will hear.

*A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children*, run by Children in Europe and Children in Scotland in conjunction with The Highland Council, will debate creative approaches to help the children's sector workforce develop and deliver essential services more effectively throughout Scotland.

Practitioners and policymakers from across the UK join speakers from Italy, Norway and Belgium to look at policy issues, including the Pisa educational performance indicators and developing an integrated approach to education and economic development. This is a theme being given priority at EU level, with improving the quality and efficiency of education and training a core objective of ET2020, a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

The conference will also explore the importance of using what is available in the local environment, culture, community and family to support children's learning and effective cross sector and partnership working, with Norwegian farmer Jostein Hunstad describing Medås, the farm kindergarten he founded 10 years ago after wolverine attacks decimated his sheep, and Pam Rodway talking about Crofting Connections, which helps young people learn traditional skills and safeguard their crofting heritage throughout the Highlands and Islands.

David Purdie, Policy Manager, Children's Workforce for the Scottish Government, said:

“Those who work with children and families do one of the most important jobs in Scotland. The time is right for us to think radically about how we support them to continue to deliver quality services now and into the future. As well as flexible skills and job roles for workers, the community as a whole, rural or urban, has a crucial role to play in the lives of children and families. It is right that we explore the role of the community and how we can all help our services become more effective.”

Neil Mitchison, Head of the European Commission office in Scotland, said:

“Education is a vital part of Europe's strategy to ensure economic recovery and long-term sustainability. All of Europe faces similar challenges: the need for lifelong learning, to

maintain the employability, flexibility and productivity of our workforce; the demographic challenge of an aging population; adapting to changing skills requirements as industry evolves; ensuring that education offers young people personal development and soft skills as well as vocational ones. In this context the European Commission supports the member states in developing educational opportunities, particularly in rural areas."

### **Notes to Editors**

1. *A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children* is on 8 June 2010 at Drumossie Hotel, Inverness. It is run by Children in Europe and Children in Scotland in conjunction with The Highland Council.
2. **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 18 countries across Europe. It provides 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 by Children in Scotland. Children in Europe Issue 18, ***A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children***, edited by conference chair Bronwen Cohen, was published on 1 March. For more information visit [www.childrenineurope.org](http://www.childrenineurope.org).
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](http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk).
4. Place-based education and services regard the local community, with its unique history, culture, environment and economy, as one of the primary resources for learning, and developing a sense of place in children as the foundation to understanding their own identity and place in the wider world. Place-based learning has been seen as particularly important in rural areas but is also relevant to many urban communities.

**To order a copy of Children in Europe magazine *A Sense of Place: environments, community and services for young children* telephone 0131 222 2400 or visit [www.childreninScotland.org.uk/publications](http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/publications)**

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