



PRESS RELEASE

10th August 2006

‘More ambition’ needed in targets for early years workforce

Children in Scotland welcomes the Executive’s Early Years Workforce Review, published today.

We appreciate the Executive’s commitment to upgrading the workforce evident in the review, and also welcome its recognition of the need to improve training in the pre-school sector.

However, the report is limited in some of its ambitions and scope. For example, it does not include nursery teachers or school age child care.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said:

“We very much welcome the Executive’s recognition that the status of those working in the early years needs to be elevated. The report raises the possibility of developing a single coherent profession for all those working in early years childcare – and suggests drawing on models from other countries to realise this.”

“We strongly encourage the Executive to do this. But we think this will require a much wider scope than the review offers – one which should involve looking beyond the pre-school workforce to encompass school age childcare, classroom assistants, and other

relevant services, such as residential care. These are all areas in which the issue of upskilling has to be addressed. We believe the review usefully highlights the possibility of a workforce that could be common to all these important areas.”

She added:

“We need to move towards ensuring that at least half of those working in early years services are qualified to degree level or equivalent – a target we call for in our own manifesto.”

“The reality is that if we don’t set that target, we will never reach it. But if it is achieved, it would enable us to have skilled and flexible workers able to work in a wide range of children’s services – meaning an investment in the workforce and in young children.”

“At present more than a quarter of our early years workforce are not qualified. But research shows that having well qualified early years leaders *and* staff supports better learning for children.”

“In the longer term, the suggestion of a Nordic-style model for pedagogues, to be trained at graduate level, would be highly desirable for Scotland.”

Children in Scotland’s ambition is for a workforce that:

- can meet the needs of the 'whole' child; and which supports active learning
- can work in a wide range of services in addition to pre-school services, ie schools, school age childcare, play, residential care, foster care, youth services
- can help children play and, for example, learn to enjoy food, both in its content and in the context of eating*

Notes for editors:

* *Children in Europe's upcoming conference An appetite for life? Young children, food and eating (25 August) will look at how learning as a young child to understand and enjoy food and eating can help to lay the basis for healthy eating throughout life. For more information, go to <http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/eur>*

Children in Scotland is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provisions are of the best possible quality and able to meet the needs of a diverse society.

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