

## *Are you listening?*

### Children in Scotland's manifesto for 2003 and beyond

Elections will be held for the next Scottish Parliament in 2003. **What do we want to ask the Parliament to do for children, young people and their families?**

Children in Scotland asked children, young people and its adult membership this question. Over 1000 children and young people responded on their key issues. Intensive workshops were held with adults, children and young people. **This manifesto reflects their headline issues.**

***Ensure that all government policies take the views and needs of children and young people into account.***

Overall view from Children in Scotland members

The Scottish Parliament has made great progress since 1997 in addressing children's issues - with new legislation, the likelihood of a Commissioner for Children and Young People, and reaching out to listen to children and young people directly. More still needs to be done, however, and **children, young people and their families need to remain central to the Scottish Parliament's agenda.**

## *Children*

IN SCOTLAND

CLANN AN ALBA

*working for children and their families*

Children in Scotland

Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, EH2 4RG

Tel: 0131 228 8484. Fax: 0131 228 8585.

E-mail: [info@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@childreninscotland.org.uk).

Web: [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk).

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 in Scotland 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. It does this with, through and for its members.



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**Children in Scotland's  
manifesto for 2003 and beyond**

## schools

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- ✓ Class should be no bigger than 15 or 20. The adult: pupil ratio should be 1:8.

*I left school about six months ago. I think it was 'cos if there are big classes and you're trying to get help with your work the teacher can't get around everybody.* Young man aged 15, Glasgow

- ✓ Move away from a narrow focus on targets and academic subjects to a flexible learning approach. A wide range of subjects needs to be taught and a broader range of activities available. Pupils should not have to spend so much time at their desks. Learning should be fun and should build young people's self-esteem.

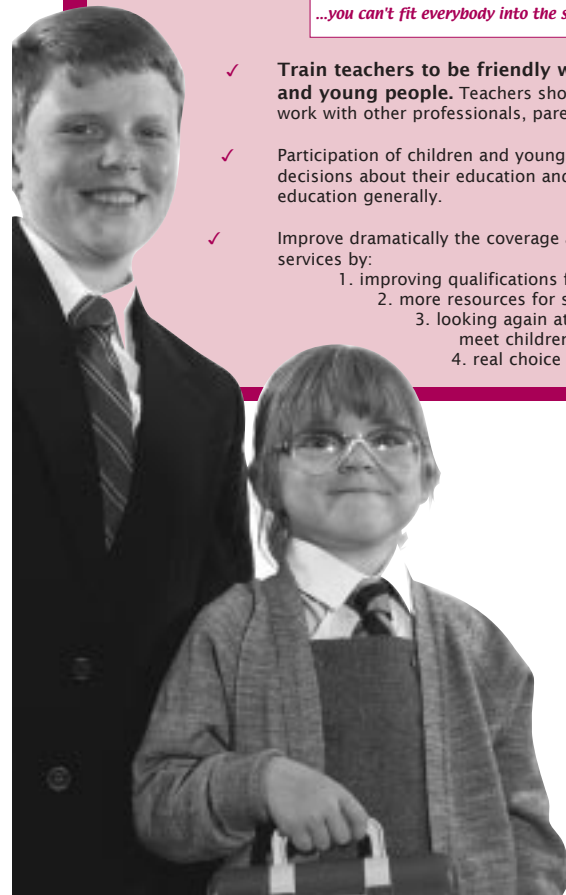
*Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; Everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.* Einstein, quoted by a member of Children in Scotland

*I don't think they teach you things you need for life.* Young person aged 14, South Lanarkshire

- ✓ Improve accessibility – physically and socially. Schools need to promote diversity and equality.

*...you can't fit everybody into the same mould.* Young woman aged 16, NW Scotland

- ✓ Train teachers to be friendly with, patient with and sensitive to children and young people. Teachers should be trained as 'learning mentors', prepared to work with other professionals, parents and pupils.
- ✓ Participation of children and young people needs to be improved both in individual decisions about their education and in 'policy' decisions about their schools and education generally.
- ✓ Improve dramatically the coverage and types of early years and out of school services by:
  1. improving qualifications for child care workers;
  2. more resources for services;
  3. looking again at the age children start school – does it meet children's learning needs?
  4. real choice on the ground for families.



## crime and safety

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- ✓ Families need to be at the heart of any youth crime strategy. Service should provide structured, focused work with families.
- ✓ Support core training for all agencies

*The police needs to be more approachable and show more tolerance towards young people* Young man aged 15, Edinburgh

- ✓ Celebrate youth success - we should be proud of our children and young people.

*92% of Scotland's children and young people do not offend* Children in Scotland member

- ✓ Young people who offend need to know what is happening in either the court or children's hearing system.

*Young people need to be given a better opportunity to understand the legal system that involves them.* Children in Scotland member



## families

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- ✓ Maintain the drive for inter-agency working to develop family support services by further integrating services through health, education and social work as well as the broader community.

- ✓ Provide well-resourced support services for young people with caring responsibilities and their families.

- ✓ Sustainability of service funding to provide children and young people with stability.

- ✓ A coherent parenting strategy for Scotland.

*Parents should educate young people on what is healthy.* Young woman aged 16, Fife

## leisure

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- ✓ Formulate a national play and leisure strategy for Scotland, which is properly resourced, holistic and supports all children and young people regardless of their needs.

*Children and Young People should drive the Physical Activity Task Force too.* Children in Scotland member

*Violence is caused by boredom/ Nowhere to go so get stopped'* Young man aged 14, Edinburgh

*Title: Skate Parks The plans were drawn, there was a big school meeting but nothing came of it.* Young man aged 17, Inverness

- ✓ Avoid a 'one size fits all' approach. Different children need different leisure opportunities.
- ✓ Every young person should have youth discount card to access public transport and leisure facilities at an affordable rate in their community.

*There's nothing for our age group, usually for younger folk.* Young man aged 15, Edinburgh



## health

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- ✓ Create a national strategy for youth health. The present focus on child health is welcome and needed. But young people's needs, in transition to adult services, can be forgotten. A growing body of research identifies barriers to health services, from lack of information to fears about patient confidentiality.

*It would be a good idea to have young people trained to give health advice to other young people* Young woman aged 12, Aberdeen

- ✓ Every young person should have access to a local advice 'drop-in' centre. Centres should offer a wide range of services; otherwise young people feel stigmatised attending. Clear confidentiality policies should be in place. The centres need to be somewhere young people can access, in both rural and urban areas.

*If it is just health, young people won't go* Young woman aged 14, Fife

*When it comes to health matters young people need someone they can trust.* Young Woman aged 15, Fife

*All young people need and should get the same services as everyone else* Young woman aged 16, Aberdeen

- ✓ Sustained investment under a holistic approach to health with meaningful 'joined-up' working between health, education and social work departments with the actual needs of young people being addressed.

