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A better future for every child **OECD results back shift to greater investment in early years**

Investing in early years services is the key to giving every child the chance of a better future, according to a report from the OECD. The findings back calls by delegates taking part in *Working for Inclusion*, the debate on the role of the early years workforce being led by Children in Scotland.

The OECD report *Doing Better for Children*, published this month, concludes that the UK's higher than average public spending on child welfare and education is failing to produce results in many key areas. The solution the OECD proposes is to invest in early years programmes, such as the Early Years Framework launched by the Scottish Government and CoSLA, concluding that spending more on young children is more likely to generate positive changes and is likely to be fairer for disadvantaged children.

The *Working for Inclusion* programme is a 2-year project funded by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government, linking 10 EU member states to discuss the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social exclusion. Debate and information-sharing is taking place through visits and a community webspace, and research across the participating countries will produce a clear picture of qualifications and skills levels in early years services across the EU.

Children in Scotland's Chief Executive Bronwen Cohen said:

"This report shows we all need to look at what governments at national and local levels are accomplishing in relation to children and young people. The findings show Scotland is on the right lines in focusing on early years provision and services and in looking for these services to be available to all families. However the success of this policy is dependent on local authorities shifting more resources to the early years as the Scottish Government Strategy urges and, as this study shows, has been done already by some of our EC partners. In Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, child poverty rates are all substantially lower than ours – 2.7% in Denmark compared with 10.1% in the UK."

Notes to Editors

1. *Working for inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion* began in February 2009 and focuses on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) systems, particularly the ECEC workforce, at local, national and European levels. It gives the opportunity to open dialogue on critical issues affecting the workforce and enables Scotland to learn from and contribute to debate and development across Europe. The community webspace will run until 2011 and can be accessed through Children in Scotland's website at www.childreninScotland.org.uk/wfi.

2. *Doing Better for Children* finds that 10.1% of children in the UK are living in poor households (below 50% of the median equivalised income) compared with 2.7% in Denmark, 4% in Sweden, 4.2% in Finland and 4.6% in Norway.
3. *Doing Better for Children* can be accessed through the OECD website at http://www.oecd.org/document/12/0,3343,en_2649_34819_43545036_1_1_1_3741_9,00.html. A UK summary is available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/6/43590251.pdf.

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