

MEDIA RELEASE – 26/08/09

Sharing the experience: debating diversity in early years provision

Early years specialists from across Europe will share experiences of addressing diversity in disability, gender, race and culture in early years provision during a 4-day study visit to Scotland next week.

The visit forms part of *Working for inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*, a 2-year programme funded by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government, and led by Children in Scotland. Delegates from five EU member states will visit 10 centres across Edinburgh, Glasgow and West Lothian that collectively showcase best practice across the whole range of early years provision in Scotland before taking part in a day-long seminar, 'Working for inclusion: the diversity dimension', in Edinburgh on 4 September.

Speakers at the seminar will include Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years; Rami Ousta, Chief Executive Officer, BEMIS; Carole Wilkinson, Chief Executive, Scottish Social Services Council; and Morag Alexander, Commissioner, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Additional Support for Learning and gender diversity in the workforce will be key themes explored during the visit and delegates will have opportunities to share experiences and practice from their own settings.

Working for Inclusion Project Manager Karen Mountney, Head of Programme and Practice Development at Children in Scotland, said:

"Children in Scotland is delighted to have the opportunity to host this study visit and share some of Scotland's leading early years provisions with our European colleagues. Working for Inclusion is a timely and important programme, which is enabling a diverse range of children's sector workers and education providers to examine the challenges they face and explore these with colleagues locally, nationally and internationally."

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 is considering the role of the early years workforce to encourage discussion, debate and information-sharing across 10 EU Member States.
2. The programme focuses attention 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.

3. Each partner in the programme (Scotland, Norway, Poland and Italy) is hosting a study visit and national conference on one of the programme's themes. A wider network of organisations in Slovenia, France, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Hungary will participate as project associates.

For a full programme for the visit, to attend any of the sessions, or for any further information, please contact Tracey Francis, 0131 222 2419.

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 provision are of the best possible quality and able to meet the demands of a diverse society. For further information visit:

www.childreninscotland.org.uk