

Executive's food bill 'must include pre-school' 22 November 2006

A new bill aimed at promoting healthy eating among children should be extended to include all pre-school provision, Children in Scotland has told a parliamentary committee. The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill will place a duty on education authorities to ensure that the food and drink supplied in schools meets nutritional requirements. The bill builds on the guidance currently in use from the Hungry For Success initiative. Children in Scotland argued that the reasons for moving towards statutory duties in schools apply equally to pre-school services. Paula Evans, policy and parliamentary information officer at Children in Scotland, said: "The provision of meals in pre-school is the key to tackling the eating habits of children from the start. We will not achieve a nutritional culture change without addressing standards in the early years." Children in Scotland welcomed the provisions to promote the uptake of nutritious school meals, but expressed disappointment that the bill did not include a stronger provision for free school meals. Paula Evans said: "Extending entitlement to free school meals makes sense from both a health and a social justice perspective. At the moment, just 18% of school children are entitled to free school meals but 23% of them are classed as being poor. At the very least this anomaly needs to be resolved by the bill." The Scottish Parliament's Communities Committee held the formal meeting to hear evidence in the @Home Centre in Airdrie today as part of its Stage 1 scrutiny of the bill. MSPs also heard evidence from Barnardos Scotland, One Plus and Save the Children, as well as pupils from Rosehall High School in Coatbridge. For more information, contact Chris Small Tel: 0131 222 2419 Mobile: 07986 589 514 Email: [csmall@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:csmall@childreninscotland.org.uk)

Notes for editors:

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.