



Children in Scotland
every child - every childhood

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Bringing science to life for children Children in Europe Annual Conference 2009 – *Exploring the world and beyond: young children as scientists*

As the new school term begins and staff and students face up to the challenge of inspiring and developing the next generation of scientists, the Children in Europe Annual Conference in Edinburgh on 16 September will bring together politicians, scientists and educationalists from across Scotland and Europe to consider how best to engage and maintain children's interest in science.

Capitalising on young children's fascination with exploration and discovery is the key to making science exciting, dynamic and relevant and to increasing the number of children choosing to study science at a higher level later in their school career. The Conference will look at:

- Scottish Government plans for the development of science and education, with a focus on science within Curriculum for Excellence;
- challenges facing teachers and educators;
- why science learning is important for young children; and
- international approaches to science education.

Keynote speakers include Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Professor Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland; and Professor Geoffrey Boulton of the University of Edinburgh, a member of the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology. Leading practitioners who work with children aged 3 to 14 will run workshops addressing topics such as how to keep pupils focused, enhance their thinking skills, inspire staff and make science accessible.

Kirk Ramsay, Chief Executive of Glasgow Science Centre, will participate in a panel discussion looking at the importance of engaging young minds. He said: "Nursery and early years education contribute to forming a child's interests and passions. Introducing science through early years play and interactions is a first step to equipping an individual to live and be successful in an increasingly scientific and technological world."

Conference Chair Kate Bellingham, former presenter of science programme *Tomorrow's World* and National STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Careers Coordinator, said:

"Young children are naturally inquisitive about the world around them: why are flowers different colours? Why does ice cream melt? Can you unboil an egg? Supporting this interest by encouraging experiment and discovery, and introducing basic scientific methods, can embed a lifelong enthusiasm and confidence with science, which can help carry through when some see it as 'too hard' or 'not my kind of thing'."

– Ends –

Notes for Editors

1. The Children in Europe Annual Conference 2009, ***Exploring the world and beyond: young children as scientists*** will take place on 16 September at Our Dynamic Earth, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh. Full details of the conference programme and workshops are at <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/explore>.
2. The event is particularly relevant to those working with children in pre-school, school and out-of-school environments; social and residential care settings; and in science learning centres, museums and outreach programmes. This includes teachers and student teachers; STEM ambassadors; careers and skills development staff; policy staff; and local authority children's services.
3. **Children in Europe:** Children in Europe is a magazine for everyone working with and for children and those interested in children's issues. It is published simultaneously in 15 languages and 17 countries by a network of national magazines across Europe. It aims to provide a forum for ideas, practice and information and to contribute to the development of policy and practice at European and national levels. It is published in the UK by Children in Scotland. Children in Europe Issue 16, ***Exploring the world and beyond: young children as scientists*** was published in March. For more information visit www.childrenineurope.org
4. **Children in Scotland** is the longstanding national 'umbrella' agency for the whole of the children's sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk

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