



PRESS RELEASE

**International conference targets
children & healthy eating
25 August, Dunfermline (Scotland)**

Embargoed: Friday 18th August 2006

An appetite for life? young children, food and eating, will examine how learning as a young child to understand and enjoy food can help to lay the basis for healthy eating throughout life.

Speakers will look at the importance of the context of food and eating in pre-school and school settings - and the need to recognise how eating together can support better learning and improved social skills.

Donatella Giovannini will look at the routines and rituals associated with lunchtime in an Italian nursery; **Elizabeth Ämting** will share her experience of outdoor teaching, cooking and eating in a rural Swedish pre-school; while **Guo Yue**, musician and author, will discuss the significance of food to his childhood in China.

Co-chaired by **Wendy Alexander MSP** and **Lisa Harker** from the Daycare Trust, the conference will look at the social, cultural and nutritional importance of food in the development of young children and examine policies and practice in the UK and Europe.

Experts will also discuss how young children can be more involved in the planning and preparation of food, and whether new EU legislation will help or hinder this process.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said:

“The conference will address key issues relating to children’s health and eating. In the UK, most three and four year olds go to school nurseries part-time and do not stay for lunch, unlike in most other European countries. Having the opportunity to eat with their peers in a social setting, participating in preparation and learning to enjoy food from the early years is likely to offset serious problems arising in later life, such as obesity and eating disorders.”

Local children and young people’s views will also be heard, with the screening of a short film on children’s experience of food. The film was shot in a Dunfermline high school and Edinburgh pre-school and is sponsored by Waitrose.

The conference will be held at the Business, Learning & Conference Centre in Dunfermline on Friday 25 August.

For more information, go to: www.childreninScotland.org.uk/eur

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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.

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