



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Embargoed: Sunday 11 June 2006**

**Class Dads, a special Children in Scotland conference held on Monday 12 June, will discuss how best to involve men in the early years, schools and their children's learning.**

Parental involvement in children's education and in the management of schools is currently high on the Scottish Executive's agenda. But such involvement has, in practice, often meant a predominantly maternal presence.

There is, however, increasing recognition of the importance of fathers and father figures in children's lives overall, and in their care and education in particular. Research shows the benefit of more fatherly involvement in a child's education and upbringing, yet public services often overlook the expanding role of fathers as carers.

Jonathan Sher, director of research, policy and practice development at Children in Scotland said: "Fathers (and grandfathers) *will* become more actively involved in caring for their own young children and in their children's learning. This has been made clear both by societal trends and new legislation. The question is not whether, but how well and with what impact. This conference will take important steps in answering this question."

The conference will consider how local authorities and agencies can provide better support for the involvement of fathers and father figures in the early years and education frameworks.

It will also explore how services can be better designed and delivered to support more effective involvement of fathers, and highlight good practice involving fathers and father figures in early years and education.

Duncan Fisher, Chief Executive of Fathers Direct, said: "This conference demonstrates how schools have a major opportunity to harness the assets that fathers can bring to their children's education."

"We know that when dad is involved, children are more likely to do well at examinations, go on to college and stick with their education. They are less likely to get involved with drugs, alcohol and the police and in the long run, they feel happier.

But often dads don't feel at ease in schools, which need to learn from the best schools that are now 'father-friendly'."

The conference will be chaired by journalist and broadcaster Ruth Wishart. Speakers include Rebecca Goldman, senior researcher, Department for Education and Skills (DfES); Alex Douglas, deputy head, Sanquhar Primary School; Sebastien Long, research officer, Le Furet, Strasbourg ([www.lefuret.org](http://www.lefuret.org)); and Celia Burn, parental involvement co-ordinator, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS).

The conference, in association with the Equal Opportunities Commission Scotland and Fathers Direct, is being held on **Monday 12 June at Glasgow Marriott Hotel**, from 9.30am until 3.30pm.

For more information, visit <http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/dad>

### **Notes for editors:**

**Children, Fathers and Fatherhood** is a three year Children in Scotland project that aims to raise awareness of issues affecting children in their relationships with their fathers and to encourage all fathers to develop their fatherhood skills.

**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 demands of a diverse society.

**Fathers Direct** is the UK's national information centre on fatherhood. Founded in 1999 by professionals with expertise in social work, family policy, business development and communications, the charity aims to create a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their fathers, supports co-operative parenting, and supports men and women as both carers and earners.  
**[www.fathersdirect.com](http://www.fathersdirect.com)**

**The Equal Opportunities Commission in Scotland** is the leading agency working to eliminate sex discrimination in Scotland. The Commission provides information and advice, campaigns on issues of sex equality and supports legal cases. It works with the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive to ensure best practice and promote equality.  
**[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)**

**For further information contact Chris Small on 0131 222 2419 or [csmall@childreninScotland.org.uk](mailto:csmall@childreninScotland.org.uk)**