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**CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND WELCOMES EARLY YEARS STATEMENT  
AND CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL LESSONS TO BE DRAWN**

Children in Scotland welcomes today's publication of the Scottish Government and COSLA's joint policy statement, 'Early Years and Early Intervention'.

The policy document outlines plans to improve early years support for children and their families and will form the basis of a month-long consultation, before an Early Years Framework is launched in the autumn.

Children in Scotland is encouraged by the statement's emphasis on:  
developing more integrated childcare services that are easier for parents and provide continuity of care for children;  
the importance of new structures within the workforce, including pedagogue roles; and  
developing integrated services that meet the holistic needs of children and families  
However, it is extremely important that we look at international models and practice to show how these goals can be achieved.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said: "Scotland has the opportunity to be a trail blazer in the vital area of early years services. It can ensure that its early years framework takes account of the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Starting Strong II report, on how to ensure services are delivered in a genuinely holistic way for children."

Two meetings in Brussels in early April are expected to call on the European commission to ensure member states take a wider approach to the provision of services for children, stressing the role services can play in providing secure, stimulating and caring environments for children and their parents.

One of the meetings, chaired by Children in Scotland chief executive Bronwen Cohen and held in association with Unicef prior to publication of their Report Card 8 on the early years, is expected to call on the EU to widen the Barcelona targets (see notes) beyond the labour market to include all children and families.

Also in April, Children in Europe will be launching a policy paper, 'Young children and their services: developing a European approach', which will recommend a more integrated and child-centred approach to early childhood education and care across Europe.

Children in Scotland is a founder member of Children in Europe and publishes the English language issue of the magazine.

For more information on the Unicef and Children in Europe meetings to be held next month, contact Chris Small: tel 0131 222 2419 / email [csmall@childreninScotland.org.uk](mailto:csmall@childreninScotland.org.uk)

Notes for editors:

The Barcelona targets: In March 2002, the Barcelona European Council acknowledged the importance of childcare in terms of growth and equal opportunities, calling on EU member states to “remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90 per cent of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 per cent of children under three years of age”. Children in Europe is a magazine for everyone working with and for children from 0-10 and those interested in children’s issues. It is published simultaneously in 12 languages by a network of national magazines from across Europe. It aims to provide a forum for ideas, practice and information and contribute to the development of policy and practice at European and national levels. It is published in the UK by Children in Scotland with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Picture this, issue 14 of Children in Europe, was published on 17 March.

Children in Scotland is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisation 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](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)