

Children IN SCOTLAND

CLANN AN ALBA

working for children and their families

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed Thursday, 8 December

Making space for children

Children in Scotland conference – Making space: architecture and design for young children.

A full programme of speakers is attached

A major international conference in Edinburgh will explore some of the most creative approaches to the design and build of spaces for young children.

The Scottish Executive is in the middle of a school building programme and children are spending more and more time in organised childcare. Architects, planners, policy-makers and those working directly with young children will gather in Edinburgh to learn about pioneering building projects in the UK and abroad.

Speakers at ***Making Space, in Edinburgh on Thursday and Friday, 8 & 9 December*** at the Sheraton Hotel, Festival Square, Edinburgh, include Karin Buvik, an architectural researcher at the Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology, who will highlight projects in Norway where new environmentally-friendly schools have been designed and built to become teaching tools for environmental studies. Pihla Meskanen, a founder of the Arkki school of architecture for children and young people in Finland will also explore how the design and building of spaces can be used to create valuable learning opportunities for children. She said: “Why not consider future school buildings as giant research laboratories? School buildings and their architecture could promote experiments in scales, shapes, colours and materials, light and shadow, natural and artificial lighting, solar power, different energy resources, energy consumption, physics, mathematics ... the list is endless.”

In the UK, architect and researcher Mark Dudek, highlights projects where high quality builds have been achieved with small budgets by involving the local community.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive of Children in Scotland, said: “We are witnessing a decline in access to safe public space, such as town squares or open countryside. With less freedom to roam and more time spent in organised space it is vitally important that we design and build high quality spaces for children.

“Designing space for children benefits from collaboration – bringing together architects, brain researchers, historians and environmentalists. Our knowledge of children’s brain development, for example, has increased dramatically. Young children’s sensory experiences, from the outer environment, and the full use of their imaginations are vital for learning.

“Our aim is to share the best ideas and encourage innovation. We can learn a lot from innovative practice across Europe, which will be highlighted at this conference. By celebrating excellence in design for the very young, we hope to inspire all those creating buildings or spaces for children.”

Deputy Education Minister, Robert Brown, said: “Scotland is in the midst of its biggest programme to upgrade school buildings for years - rebuilding or significantly renovating 300 schools by 2009. We know that modern facilities and bright well-designed buildings make all the difference to education. I welcome this opportunity to examine the possibilities to meet the highest environmental standards, while supporting innovative design for young children.”

Good practice examples of architecture and design for young children are examined in detail in issue 8 of the European magazine Children in Europe ‘*Making space: architecture and design for young children*’ (See notes for editors).

Notes for editors:

- ***Making space: architecture and design for young children*** is organised by Children in Scotland in association with Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Children in Europe and with sponsorship from Lend Lease, with support from the Scottish Executive.
- **Children in Europe** is a network of eight magazines in the UK (Children in Scotland produces the English Language version), Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands, reaching workers in childcare and education, policy-makers and academics. The latest issue is on architecture and young children, and can be ordered online at www.childrenscotland.org.uk/cie
- **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.
- **The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland** was founded in 1916 as the professional body for all chartered architects in Scotland and is the foremost architectural professional institute in the country dealing with architecture and the built environment. It has charitable status and offers a wide range of services and products for architects, students of architecture, construction industry professionals and all those with an interest in the built environment and the design process.

- **Lend Lease** aims to create and manage property in a way that serves individuals, communities and businesses in an innovative, safe and efficient manner. It aspires to have a positive effect on the wider community and environment, to support economic prosperity and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. www.lendlease.com
- **The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** has 30 member countries and works with over 70 countries worldwide.

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