Getting it Right for Early Years

Scottish Pre-school Play Association
Annual Review 2009-2010
Who We Are and What We Do

The Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA) is Scotland’s largest voluntary sector national umbrella organisation provider of direct support services to community led pre-school education and childcare services.

Mission

SPPA supports community based early education and childcare services for children and families.

Vision

To enrich the lives of children to become confident and successful individuals learning through play.

From the Chairperson and Chief Executive

The early years sector in Scotland has seen several significant policy developments in the past year. The implementation of the Early Years Framework, the qualification framework for managers and practitioners, and the introduction of Getting It Right For Every Child, have continued to be a focus for government, both local and national, impacting on the work of many providers of community based childcare services. SPPA has been a keen contributor to these policy initiatives. Through meetings with Ministers and officials, at local and national government level, participating in consultations, advisory groups, policy forums and sector bodies, SPPA has been able to represent the views of our members, and to emphasise the value and continued need for third sector pre-school education and childcare provision which serves local communities.

SPPA member pre-school playgroups and day care services continue to provide much needed play, early education opportunities, childcare, and support for children’s health and wellbeing. Parents and carers are still an essential part of their group’s management committee, enhancing and acquiring skills as a contribution to their life long learning and to their local community. Yet there are enormous challenges. Whilst striving to sustain the vibrant and far reaching contribution of delivering the best outcomes for children and their families, the sustainability of parts of the sector is threatened because of the fragility of some voluntary led management committees; the capacity to train and retain a qualified workforce; the precariousness of funding and the increasing trend to deliver some services through local authorities; and the scarcity of resources.

As we weather this particular storm and address the impacts of the current economic uncertainty, we are encouraged by the ability of our members and other voluntary sector providers to meet and manage the challenge of change at a time of unparalleled resource constraints. With continued understanding and support for the role of the voluntary early years sector by our partners in government, funders and supporters, SPPA firmly believes that as an umbrella organisation, supporting 1,203 early years and childcare groups providing community led and based services, we are able to promote quality services that enrich the lives of children in 34,000 families throughout Scotland.

We aim to come through the recession having responded to the challenges we face, and aspire to be stronger and adaptable, to continue to provide a range services for our members and our partners in the year ahead.

“...She loves coming to the group. She asks me each morning ‘is this playgroup day?’ She would come every day if she could.”

Parent, Falkirk
Key Achievements

Support

SPPA’s work has helped to support the work of 1,203 member groups with 34,000 children attending these, and 19,000 volunteers helping. It has provided a range of services; good practice information, training and development opportunities, advocacy and policy representation to providers of childcare services. Staff teams have provided support on all aspects of practice in early years and childcare settings. Seventeen discrete support and information services have been provided in local authority areas where SPPA has been funded.

Off to a Good Start and Govan Health Projects

The Off to a Good Start and the Govan Health projects in South West Glasgow have delivered services to those who are not in group settings. These projects have given parents and children experience of learning through play activities, and have contributed towards improving family diet, oral health and physical activity levels. They have provided learning opportunities and also helped towards strengthening family relationships, health and wellbeing.

Langlees Family Centre Toddler Project

This new project has introduced a variety of sessions to parents and toddlers in Falkirk, which have included outdoor play, healthy eating, painting, developing language skills, treasure baskets and heuristic play.

Wee Voices Project

In Fife, SPPA is a partner with the Council and the Children’s Parliament in the development of an innovative project. Central to this is a firm belief that children of all ages have a right to have their voices heard in all matters that concern them. With the aim of developing a children’s rights programme for the early years, it demonstrates a commitment to improving opportunities for very young children to become active citizens within family life and their communities.

Play and Toddler Development Services

These services in Dumfries and Galloway have delivered play sessions to 4,674 children. From July 2010 they merged and became the Play Service, which operates with four key play officers, based in four geographic areas, who focus on vulnerable families from within a universal service.

Information and helpline

SPPA’s information and helpline service has responded to queries on such diverse issues as employment, policies, management committees, constitutions and medication; and links with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator have allowed us to provide timely information on charity regulation.

“Excellent. Very helpful with advice, knowledgeable, empathetic, quick to respond. A first class service without fault.”
Playgroup staff, Glasgow

“It’s so good to get such a quick answer from an organisation with an early years perspective.”
Committee Member, Aberdeenshire
Insurance

Our insurance package from RSA has remained competitive, and has provided cover that has enabled members to feel secure knowing that staff, volunteers, children, and resources are well protected.

New website, e-news and resources

We have redesigned the website which now includes a ‘frequently asked questions’ section, and have launched an electronic newsletter to enhance communication with our membership and other stakeholders. Over the last year 12,153 visitors have visited the website of which 8,381 were first time visitors. We have revised the SPPA information brochure, created an insurance leaflet, updated our Child Protection Guidelines and Policies for Early Years Providers and produced guidance on internet banking, non payment of fees and also a comprehensive staff handbook. Our membership magazine First Five continues to be highly valued.

Contributions to consultations on policy development and legislation

SPPA has been represented in the development of national and local policy developments on the Care Commission National Consistency Quality Forum, Scottish Play Policy Forum, Childcare Partnerships, Childhood Practice Development Group and the Coalition of Childhood Umbrella Organisations.

SPPA has contributed to debates and consultations on policy developments and legislation which have included The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Implementation: Consultation on Significant Draft Secondary Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Impact Assessment and a Discussion Paper on Unincorporated Associations. These responses can be viewed at www.sppa.org.uk

SPPA has written a submission to The Scottish Parliament Finance Committee's Strategic Scrutiny of the Scottish Government’s Budget on the impact of the recession on public sector budgets for 2009 – 2010; and in future years, in particular, the pressures and demands on the 2010 - 2011 budget, and the likely implications for its budget in the longer term. SPPA has also provided oral evidence to the Committee, having been selected from the Policy Committee of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations to represent the interests of community-led, early years and childcare sectors.

Work with a variety of organisations and links with UK wide pre-school umbrella bodies

Representing the views of our membership, we have worked with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Care Commission, Scottish Social Services Council, HMIE, SQA, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Children in Scotland, Play Scotland, Scottish Play Policy Forum, Scottish Childminding Association, Scottish Learning Networks, Community Planning Partnerships, Childcare Partnerships, SOSCN, NHS Health Scotland, Children in Scotland, Sure Start, and other local, national and UK childcare agencies such as CALA, Pre-school Learning Alliance, Wales Pre-school Providers Association, Irish Pre-school Play Association, and Early Years, the organisation for young children in Northern Ireland, NDNA and AQNS. We have also presented SPPA's work to senior directors in women's affairs and children's education on a study tour from China.

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Playgroup Manager, Aberdeen

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Annual conference and staff development

‘Positive Partnerships: Investing in the Future’, SPPA’s 2009 National Conference, AGM and Exhibition held in Glasgow, provided a platform to reinforce the aspirations of the Early Years Framework and underlined the importance of partnership working. Tam Baillie, Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People, challenged all to think about what they are doing to improve children’s lives through the Framework. Speakers demonstrated how to enhance positive learning outcomes for Scotland’s youngest children.

Staff have benefited from continuing professional development and the staff intranet has provided practice guidance. The one day staff conference and SPPA National Conference were attended by the majority of staff. Support has been given for staff to work towards qualifications and accredited awards in relation to their job role. Several staff members have attained a qualification this year such as SVQ Level 4 in Management and SVQ Level 4 in Children’s Care Learning and Development.

SPPA Membership Profile

SPPA has a total of 1203 member groups, of which:

- 549 are Parent and Toddler Groups;
- 362 are Playgroups;
- 91 are Combined Playgroup and Toddler Groups;
- 110 are All Day Care Groups;
- 13 are Out of School Care Groups;
- 26 are Under Fives Groups;
- 14 are Family Centres;
- 5 are Crèches; and
- 1 is a Playscheme.

32 groups are Associate Members.

“All speakers good and I enjoyed sessions dealing with practical issues which are of interest to childcare workers.”

Conference Delegate
Financial Overview 2009-2010

During a period of significant economic downturn, the charity’s limited income resources have been particularly adversely affected by a loss of income in local authority service agreements and funding. The deficit of £48,000 was recorded against a total income of £1.4m. Expenditure was reduced by £111,000 during the year and we are continuing to control all costs and to actively pursue a variety of income sources in 2010/11.

Summarised Accounts

Income and Expenditure for the year 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2010

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<th>Income</th>
<th>£000s</th>
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<td>Scottish Government Grant</td>
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<td>Local Authority Grants</td>
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<td>Membership Fees</td>
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<td>Fundraising &amp; Sponsorship</td>
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<td>Bank Interest</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Expenditure</th>
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<td><strong>Salaries</strong></td>
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<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>Redundancy costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
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| Deficit for Year                    | -48   |

The above figures are the results for the Scottish Pre-school Play Association only. Full consolidated group accounts are available on request by contacting the Company Secretary at SPPA Centre, 21-23 Granville Street, Glasgow G3 7EE.
Thanks to our Funders

SPPA wishes to thank and acknowledge funding from the Scottish Government Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate (Positive Futures Division), the following local authorities; Fife, Glasgow City, Scottish Borders, Stirling, Western Isles, West Lothian, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Dundee City, Edinburgh City, Falkirk, funding from Glasgow City Council Community Planning Section, and NHS Glasgow and Clyde. Step by Step Educational Suppliers have supported the National Conference, Annual Prize Draw and have donated products to give to readers of First Five magazine. Haven Fun & Fitness and Mackay Corporate Insurance Brokers have sponsored publications.

SPPA Offices

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SPPA wishes to thank MacKay Corporate Insurance Brokers for their support in the production of this year’s annual review.