Improving Outcomes for Early Years
Annual Review 2010-2011

Scottish Pre-school Play Association
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.

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

Our Vision
To enrich the lives of children to become confident and successful individuals learning through play.
As I finish my final year as Chair, and reflect upon the changing environment in which we work, there have been a large number of changes for the organisation, for staff and for children.

Staff registering with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has lead to many of us, myself included, undertaking a higher level of training than we had previously done. As I now start my final year of study for my level 9 BA qualification in Childhood Practice, I can say that the knowledge I have gained has greatly benefited my group, both staff and children.

All staff working with children became familiar with the Curriculum for Excellence and the knowledge that they were already doing the work, took away any fears there may have been.

Other changes have been the introduction of Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) and the amalgamation of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) within Education Scotland; in addition the Early Years Framework and Getting it Right for Every Child have had an impact on our work. I know that our groups are taking these changes on board and fulfilling our vision of positive outcomes for children.

We have introduced the SPPA Volunteer of the Year and Group of the Year Awards which have enabled us to acknowledge the work of our groups and the volunteers who play a vital role within them. I would like to thank all who work or volunteer within their communities for taking time to ensure that our youngest citizens are well prepared for the changing world we live in.

Isabel Dunn

The past year has been an anxious time for SPPA, our staff and our membership. A survey conducted by SPPA confirmed that cuts in funding to public services have impacted hard on many people in our sector. We have lost experienced staff to redundancy, and our Policy Manager, Margaret Brunton, retired after a remarkable 30 years service to the Association, in a variety of roles.

Despite the pressures, SPPA and our member groups have continued to achieve positive outcomes for children in their early years. With a greater focus on the benefits of early interventions, we have contributed to the national and local policy environment, influencing the way in which we work and engage with young children and their families in local communities. We have worked with vulnerable children and their parents and they have benefitted from our play development services. We have also seen the advantage of working closer together with our partners in the sector, not least in supporting workforce development initiatives.

This Annual Review summarises our achievements which I am delighted to present on behalf of our Board, our members and partners. My warm thanks go to the hard working SPPA staff team, the Board of Directors and our membership who have made them possible.

Ian McLaughlan
One Enriching Children’s Lives Manifesto

Late last year, SPPA launched our new manifesto for the early years, Enriching Children’s Lives. We called upon the Scottish Government and elected representatives to continue investing in early years learning and childcare, and to do more to secure a future role for voluntary sector provision. It is heartening to see the Scottish Government’s commitment to our three key messages which were that the early years are a period of formative learning and development which define our society in the long term; parents and the wider family have the greatest influence on children; and collaborative and partnership working helps to develop holistic approaches to ‘getting it right for every child’.

Two Influencing Early Years and Childcare Policy

- SPPA has informed and influenced national and local policy development and implementation, through meetings with Scottish Government Ministers and officials and networking with other agencies. We have participated in working groups such as the national workforce development initiatives through the Childhood Practice Development Group, the Scottish Social Services Council working groups on Recognition of Prior Learning and Continuous Learning Framework, and Learning Networks.

- SPPA has been represented on the Care Commission National Consistency Quality Forum, the Scottish Play Policy Forum, Childcare Partnerships, the Coalition of Childhood Umbrella Organisations, and Glasgow City Council Early Childhood and Extended Childcare Services Strategy Group. We have participated in Professor Susan Deacon’s ‘Think Pods’ which helped to shape the Scottish Government report Joining the Dots and also in developments for the Curriculum for Excellence.

- SPPA has contributed as a member of the steering group and participated in focus groups regarding the feasibility of merging Children’s Care Learning and Development and HSC level 3 and 4 awards. We have ongoing involvement through the review of the National Occupational Standards.

- SPPA has responded to consultations on policy developments. These have included the Review of the Policy for Peripatetic Managers in Day Care of Children Services, the new Scrutiny Bodies, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) replacing the Care Commission, the Protecting of Vulnerable Groups Scheme, and the Scottish Government’s Consultation on the Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the Children’s Workforce in Scotland. To read the responses visit www.sppa.org.uk.

- SPPA is a member of the steering group for the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People’s Wee Blether campaign for consulting with very young children, and is represented on Play Scotland’s Reference Group for the GO Play Indicators Project.
Three  Working in Partnership

- As a member of the Coalition of Childhood Umbrella Organisations, we have been involved in the production of the Guidance for Mentoring in Childhood Practice for employers, training providers, potential mentors and mentees.

- SPPA has worked in partnership with local authorities and the NHS to deliver services to children and families across Scotland. We have worked with several third sector agencies, twelve local authorities’ social work and education departments, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, the Tayforth Learning Network, and the Project Board that is planning crèche services in Benarty in Fife.

- The Wee Voices Project in Fife, the aim of which is to develop a children’s rights programme for the early years, has successfully undertaken a practical research project based in a partner provider playgroup. SPPA, the Children’s Parliament, and Fife Council are continuing to work together to develop this work.

- Our networking has included meeting with early years strategic policy and decision makers from Lithuania, and the Chief Officer of the Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health in Children and Youth in Serbia, who were in Scotland on a fact finding tour.

Four  Working with Children and Families

In addition to our core services to voluntary sector providers, we have increased our work to deliver early intervention services in South West Glasgow and in Dumfries & Galloway to children and families who are identified as at risk, isolated or in need of additional support. These services have included children and families referred to SPPA by other agencies such as social work or the NHS. They operate in neutral environments which encourage vulnerable parents to participate and feel at ease.

Early Intervention Services

We have worked with pre-school children and parents in Sure Start projects and in play development initiatives. Play sessions are a vital part of a child’s early learning and have included sand, water and paint activities. Sessions have included baby massage and baby play activities, which focus on child development. We have worked with health visitors and social workers to build confidence and parenting skills. These services reached many families who might not have accessed mainstream services.

The Off to a Good Start programme for toddler groups based in Glasgow, with its workshops on healthy eating, books and story sacks, music, physical play, creative play and treasure baskets, has expanded this year.

We really enjoyed taking part. It’s great to see how easily and quickly healthy snacks can be put together.

Five  Redesigning Governance Models

Thanks to funding received from the Scottish Government’s Social Enterprise Fund, we were able to review the ways in which our members are governed. Through the work of our subsidiary company, we established procedures for peripatetic management and direct provision as alternatives to management committee led services. This also follows on from the introduction of a new form of corporate body which has been designed exclusively for Scottish charities called the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).
SPPA has worked with pre-school children and parents in Sure Start projects and in play development initiatives.
Supporting Our Groups

SPPA has continued to support the work of our 1,111 member groups that serve the needs of 30,000 children and 17,000 volunteers. We have provided a range of services locally and centrally, shared good practice, and offered training and development opportunities, advocacy and policy representation to providers of childcare services in the private, voluntary and independent sector.

Staff teams have provided support on all aspects of practice in early years and childcare settings. Support and information services have been provided in local authority areas where SPPA has been funded.

Information and Helpline

With a decreasing number of funded contracts from local authorities, SPPA’s information and helpline service has been very popular in the past year. We have responded to queries on such diverse issues as insurance, employment, medication, constitutions, finance, the Protecting of Vulnerable Groups Scheme, policies and management committees. Links with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator have allowed us to provide information on charity regulation and governance.

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.

Website, E-news and Resources

Our communications systems have continued to develop. Traffic on the website has increased by almost 30%, compared to last year. There were over 16,000 unique visitors to the site this year, of which almost 12,000 were visiting it for first time and over 4,000 had visited before. The electronic news bulletin reached member groups, individuals and organisations. We completed our first electronic membership survey. Our blog was launched in January 2011 and we created a Facebook page in May 2011. Regular postings have given our position on a range of issues, and invited comment and discussion. Feedback from our membership continued to demonstrate the value of our quarterly magazine, First Five, for keeping up to date with policy, issues and practice in early years services.

We have revised our Whistleblowing Policy, the Child Protection Guidelines and Policies for Early Years Providers, Recruitment Policy, Curriculum Policy, Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, and the SPPA Information leaflet, and have produced a Portfolio of Services leaflet.

Annual Conference and Staff Development

We held a very successful National Conference and AGM in Edinburgh last November entitled “Getting it Right for Early Years” with several prominent key speakers. Dr Carol Craig spoke about how to promote children’s well-being, Alan Sinclair stressed the need to invest in the early years and Jim Stephen updated the Scottish Government’s policies and time frame to bring about change, with the early identification of problems, and intervention, key priorities.

SPPA staff have benefited from continuing professional development. Our in house electronic newsletter Communication Update and the intranet have provided practice guidance. A successful staff conference was held in Perth in September, and staff also attended the SPPA National Conference. Support has been given for staff to work towards qualifications and accredited awards in relation to their job role. Two staff members have attained the SVQ 4 Children’s Care Learning and Development qualification this year and one has attained the PDA in Higher Education.
SPPA has worked in partnership with local authorities and the NHS to deliver services to children and families across Scotland.
SPPA Membership Profile

SPPA has a total of 1,111 members groups, of which:

516 are Parent and Toddler Groups
333 are Playgroups
90 are Combined Playgroup and Toddler Groups
94 are All Day Care Groups; 11 are Out of School Care Groups
23 are Under Fives Groups
11 are Family Centres
1 Crèche and 1 Play Scheme.

There are also 17 agency members and 14 individual members; 15 groups are Associate Members.

SPPA Board of Directors 2010-2011

Isabel Dunn: Chairperson
Lesley Wallace: Vice Chairperson
Fraser Sanderson: Finance Director
Lindsay Cully
Dougie Clark
Marion Matheson
Beverly Malcolm
Monica Langa
Safa Ash-kuri
Nicholas Johnston
Barbara Dale
Niall Shaw

Many Thanks to Our Funders

We would like to thank our funders. We are grateful for the support we received from the Scottish Government Children and Families Directorate (Early Years Team); the Social Enterprise Fund; local authority funding from Fife, Glasgow City, Scottish Borders, Stirling, Western Isles, West Lothian, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh City, and Falkirk Councils; funding from NHS Glasgow and Clyde; Step by Step Educational Suppliers’ support for the National Conference and their donation of products for readers of First Five magazine; and Haven Fun & Fitness and Mackay Corporate Insurance Brokers for their support in the production of publications.
Financial Overview 2010-2011

During the ongoing period of significant economic downturn the charity’s limited income resources continued to be adversely affected by a loss of income in local authority service agreements and grants. A deficit of £39,000 was recorded against a total income of £1.2m. Expenditure was further reduced by £165,000 during the year and we are continuing to control all costs and to actively pursue a variety of income sources in 2011/12.

Summarised Accounts

Income and Expenditure for the year 1 April 2010 - 31 March 2011

| Income                | £ 000's | %  
|-----------------------|---------|---
| Scottish Government Grant | 252,679 | (20) |
| Local Authority Grants | 759,075 | (61) |
| Membership Fees       | 77,110  | (6)  |
| Fundraising & Sponsorship | 4,187   | (-)  |
| Bank Interest         | 11,529  | (1)  |
| Other Income          | 140,844 | (12) |
| **Total Income**      | **1,245,424** |   |

| Expenditure            | £ 000's | %  
|------------------------|---------|---
| Staff costs            |         |   
| Salaries               | 896,413 | (70) |
| Expenses               | 12,630  | (1)  |
| Redundancy costs       | 47,069  | (4)  |
| **Total Expenditure**  | **1,284,843** |   |

Deficit for year : **-39,419**

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.

www.sppa.org.uk
SPPA has informed and influenced national and local early years policy development and implementation, through meetings with Scottish Government Ministers and officials, and networking with other agencies.
SPPA wishes to thank Cool Milk and MacKay Corporate Insurance Brokers for their support in the production of this year’s annual review.