INSIDE THIS ISSUE: EYS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOES ONLINE • UPDATE FROM THE MINISTER • CHILD POVERTY • THE BENEFITS OF STORYTELLING • HAVE FUN WITH MUSIC • AND MUCH MORE..
BECOME A MEMBER OF EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?
- All Early Learning and Childcare Settings (Voluntary, Local Authority, Private) • Parent and Toddler Groups
- Combined Early and Learning and Childcare and Parent and Toddler Groups • College Departments
- University Departments • Primary Schools • Individual Practitioners • Individual Students • Childminders
- Local Authorities (Some local authorities purchase membership for all their Early Learning and Childcare settings)
- Voluntary Sector Organisations • National Organisations (other than voluntary) • Companies and Businesses

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP?

Helpline: 0141 221 4148
For information, support or advice about any aspect of Early Learning and Childcare, our members can call our helpline Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm.

Website with exclusive members’ area
Access free downloads, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section, sample policies and much more.

Magazines
Early Years Scotland publishes and sends two different magazines directly to members by post three times per year - one magazine for early years professionals and the other for parents and carers, called Parent Chat. All magazines are available to members on our website.

E-Bulletins
Regular e-bulletins and surveys are sent to all members to ensure that they are kept up to date and to make certain we are aware of their views. We are the representative voice of the Early Years sector.

Publications and Resources
Early Years Scotland publishes a number of publications on our website, some of which are free and others are for sale. Members log in at the members’ only area (My EYS) to access free policies. We also offer Top Tips for Parents focused on a range of themes such as puppets and visiting the supermarket.

EYS Professional Learning Academy
We offer bespoke professional learning sessions on request. We provide a regular calendar of Professional Learning opportunities in our Professional Learning Academy premises in Glasgow City Centre. We run conferences and seminars with discounted rates for members.

Insurance
We can arrange excellent discounted insurance cover and legal advice for our members.
Early Years Scotland is determined that every child in Scotland should expect, and be given, the very best start in life. We know that high quality funded ELC provision for families is a major part of that pledge, and that what happens in children’s early years is a strong predictor of their future.
It was a sunny Monday morning in August 1981. It was the first day of my first job as a teacher. As I walked through the door of Wyndford Nursery School in Maryhill, Glasgow, I had no idea what lay ahead.

Little did I know, that I was taking my first steps into a life-long career that would lead me to a whole array of exciting, varied and rewarding jobs and adventures.

Little did I know, that working in the early years sector would bring wonderful opportunities to work in nursery, primary, FE college, University, Education Scotland — always with a focus on working with, or for Scotland’s youngest children.

Little did I know that in 2020, I would, after almost 7 years in post, be retiring from my role as CEO of Early Years Scotland, the best organisation on the planet! How can I be retiring? That only happens to other people…

As I look back, I count myself as extremely fortunate, having loved all of my job roles, and having had the opportunity to meet and work with so many incredible friends and colleagues, who have an unwavering commitment and determination, to find new and better ways to give every child in Scotland an equal and excellent start in life.

Working in Early Years Scotland with the tremendous Board of Directors, and the one and only ‘Team EYS’, has truly been the pinnacle of my career. It has been the most challenging, and at the same time, the most rewarding job ever.

Retiring from a job that you love is a tricky thing — you experience a hotchpotch of emotions every five minutes, but overall, you feel so proud to have been given the opportunity to be part of something exceptional. For that privilege, I would like to thank every individual member of the Board, every member of our fabulous staff team, and of course all of our EYS members — you have all given me the most precious gift that a CEO could only dream of.

I feel that Early Years Scotland represents a microcosm of the wider Early Learning and Childcare sector, as it involves:

• working directly with children and families
• supporting the workforce through membership
• delivering high quality learning through our EYS Professional Learning Academy
• helping to shape, support, influence and challenge policy.

Looking forward, the ELC expansion will undoubtedly bring unparalleled change and opportunity for children and families in Scotland. When I started off almost 40 years ago, I could never have imagined in a million years that there would be a universal funded offer of 1,140 hours of high quality ELC for every child! This is a phenomenal investment, and one that children truly deserve. My main hope is that this investment will extend to the workforce so that they become a much more highly regarded profession and be recognised and rewarded with a salary that is more consistent with other professionals.

I also hope that, as the expanded hours become embedded, there will be a move towards recognising the critical importance of parents/carers as an integral part of the funded picture, especially, but not exclusively, for eligible 2 year olds. Separating off children and parents for longer periods, at younger ages, is not necessarily going to bring about the changes we seek. Working with and supporting children and families together is much more likely to bring about positive transformational change. The wonderful EYS Stay Play and Learn service exemplifies this!

On that note, I am so delighted to know that EYS will continue to flourish under the leadership of my highly valued, and much respected colleague, Jane Brumpton. It is fantastic that Jane, current Depute CEO of Early Years Scotland for the last five years, has been appointed as the new CEO from 1 March 2020. Jane is an outstanding appointment, and will absolutely hit the ground running, with her vast and detailed knowledge and understanding of the organisation, and the sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Jane, the Board, and Early Years Scotland, huge success in their work as they continue to make tremendous strides towards giving every child in Scotland the best start in life.

Jean Carwood-Edwards
Thank you to Jean from the EYS Board

The Board of Directors of Early Years Scotland would like to thank Jean Carwood Edwards, as she retires from her post as CEO of the organisation. When discussing Jean’s contribution to EYS, a board member reminded me of a quote from Urie Bronfenbrenner who stated that, ‘Every child deserves to have someone who is crazy about them’. This quote lies at the heart of everything Jean does, as she is passionate about the welfare of all Scotland’s children and families.

She has an absolute commitment to children and their families, perhaps in particular those in the most challenging of circumstances, and the depth of her knowledge, experience and ambition in these areas has made a real difference to the lives of many families.

Jean’s leadership of the organisation has developed the staff at EYS into an effective and committed EYS team and has taken the organisation to the point where it is recognised as the leading early years organisation in the country, with increasing involvement in national decision-making for the sector.

Many innovative programmes have been introduced during Jean’s tenure including:

- Developing the brand of EYS Stay, Play and Learn which has embedded and highlighted the need for the involvement of parents in early learning and childcare
- Extending our ground-breaking work in prisons
- The introduction and development of the Early Years Scotland Professional Learning Academy

Jean has also been instrumental in finding new sources of funding to help ensure that EYS is in a strong financial position. At a time of real financial constraint, within local and national government, new relationships have been developed with many local authorities and funders to ensure the financial future of the organisation.

All the above done, of course, with Jean’s usual charm, enthusiasm and verve!

The Board at EYS is delighted to have worked with Jean and wish her the best in every new venture. We thank her again for her service to Early Years Scotland.

Barbara Dale
Chair of EYS Board of Directors

*Jean has no idea that this thank you from Barbara and the Board is included in the magazine, and will be reading this for the first time when she picks up her copy. Hope you’re not blushing too much, Jean!*

EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

We are delighted to announce that the 2020 Early Years Scotland National Conference will be taking place on Saturday 5 September at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Glasgow Central, 36 Cambridge Street, Glasgow G2 3HN.

We are looking forward to welcoming colleagues from across the country to another fantastic day of professional learning and networking.

Details of speakers and presenters, and the programme for the day, will appear on our website and social media pages as soon as they are confirmed.

In the meantime, you can register your interest at info@earlyyearsscotland.org or by calling 0141 221 4148. We will be in touch with further information once the booking window has officially opened.

Introducing Niamh O’Connor, National Head of the Scottish Government’s Early Learning and Childcare Quality Unit

Hello! My name is Niamh O’Connor and I’m the new Head of the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Unit in the Scottish Government. It’s a fantastic group of people, with three teams — Learning and Wellbeing, headed up by Liz Levy; Workforce Capacity, headed up by Kathryn Chisholm; and Workforce Development, headed up by Fiona McDiarmid. Prior to this post I worked in Health Policy in the Scottish Government, heading up the team responsible for negotiating, then implementing, the new GP contract in Scotland.

I’m genuinely excited and feel lucky to have joined the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Unit at such a pivotal time in its development in Scotland. The opportunity of the expansion to continuously improve the quality of our Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland. It is really about helping to make children’s lives better. Yes, there is a lot to do, and there will be challenges along the way, but there is no motivation better than that.

Outside of work, I like to run, listen to music, and hang out with the family. We have three boys aged 16, 13 and 10 - who have been lucky to benefit from every type of early learning and childcare from private nurseries, local authority nurseries, childminders and after school clubs. Most of my top parenting tips have come from the brilliant practitioners we’ve met working in early learning and childcare over the years - so thank you!
Happy New Year! I am excited to be entering 2020 as this is, of course, the year when children’s entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) will nearly double. From August 2020, all 3 and 4 year olds, and around a quarter of 2 year olds, will be eligible for 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare a year, funded by the Scottish Government and local authorities. That’s 30 hours a week if taken during school term time, or 22 hours a week all year round.

Across the country, local authorities have already started to introduce some extra hours, as they phase in the 1,140 hours. I’ve really enjoyed meeting children and families that are accessing these hours already. Parents have told me about the extra opportunities their children are able to access through extra hours of funded ELC, and about the impact it’s having on their children’s communication and confidence.

January marked the launch of our parent marketing campaign. You’ll hopefully start to spot the ‘This Much’ adverts on bus stops or in your social media feeds. The campaign is designed to help families understand their child’s entitlement. It directs families to the Parent Club website (www.parentclub.scot/elc) so that they can get the information they need to make informed choices.

But we know that another very important source of information is you. Parents and carers will often come to professionals that they trust, with their questions about ELC and other things. We want to make it as straightforward as possible for you to be able to support them, so the Parent Club website is a tool for you too. It has information about the ELC entitlement, as well as links to each local authority website, so that parents can access local information about funding or application forms.

I know that the ELC expansion is already having a significant impact for many of you, and that your setting may have been affected by large-scale recruitment exercises underway across Scotland. The Scottish Government and local government are working closely with Early Years Scotland and other sector representative groups to find further ways of supporting you. I wanted to bring to your attention a few recent resources that you may find helpful:

- To support your continuous professional learning, we are developing a range of online modules which will be available to everyone in the sector later this year.

I am grateful to the many colleagues from across the ELC sector who have supported us to develop these resources. At the moment, working groups including representatives from all parts of the sector, are looking at how we can recognise the prior learning of those wishing to join the ELC workforce, and how we can better support leadership development. I look forward to receiving their advice and ideas later in the year.

Very best wishes for 2020 and thank you all for your fantastic and vitally important contribution to improving children’s lives in Scotland.
As we move towards the increased hours entitlement of free early learning and childcare in 2020, it’s a great time to consider your career and tell others about your #lifecahngework. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has lots of resources to help you.

New careers website
We’ve launched a new careers website for social services in Scotland which will help people coming into the sector for the first time, and those already working in it, to develop their careers.

The website, www.careersincare.scot, has a dedicated section on working with children and young people which has lots of useful information including:

- career stories from real workers in early learning and other childcare settings
- interactive qualification pathways to show how to enter the sector and progress in your career
- links to opportunities to work, train or study
- frequently asked questions with advice about funding, qualifications and more.

The qualifications for working with children and young people pathway, shows clearly how different routes into work and qualifications link to each other, and how you can move along the pathway as you develop your career.

We hope that anyone interested in working with children and young people can use the website to make their first steps and that it gives those already working in the sector some inspirational ideas about where their career might take them next.

The website was developed in partnership with NHS Scotland Careers, Skills Development Scotland, Iriss, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Government.

Pilot ELC graduate apprenticeship
The Scottish Government, the SSSC and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are piloting the early learning and childcare (ELC) graduate apprenticeship over the next three years. It’s designed to widen access to ELC careers at degree level. The first cohort started in September 2019 and is being delivered by two approved learning providers.

Each provider will have a cohort of 15 with a total of 30 apprenticeship places over a three-year degree programme.

The Scottish Government is funding the pilot and SDS is leading development work. Subject to further funding being available, SDS will agree further cohorts of apprentices to start study in 2020. The SSSC has agreed that anyone starting the graduate apprenticeship (GA) during the three-year pilot period will be able to register as a practitioner with a condition they complete the full three-year GA.

You can read more at www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02810/en-us

Modern apprentices and SSSC registration
There’s been some confusion among employers, learning providers and colleges over the registration of apprentices so we’d like to remind people that the SSSC has two roles in this respect.

- Apprenticeship registration - we register and certificate apprentices as the sector skills council for social service qualifications in Scotland.
- SSSC job role registration - apprentices are employees, as they earn while they learn, so that means if they work in a role that requires SSSC registration they must register for that role.

Find out more at www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02687/en-us
The Care Inspectorate’s new corporate plan sets out our priorities for 2019-2022, including our aim to be an organisation that identifies, develops and shares good practice. I would like to do whatever I can to help drive more improvement and innovation in social care. Our corporate plan is based on what we have learned from our scrutiny, assurance and improvement support work over the past few years. It has been informed through wide public consultation and through collaboration with staff, providers, health and social care partnerships, local and national partners and, most importantly, by people who experience care. I am equally keen to ensure that person-led care and public involvement continues to be central to our work, by taking account of people’s stories and personal experiences and look forward to collaborating with Early Years Scotland around this.

Many people in Scotland will experience health and social care services at some stage in their lives. I believe that everyone has the right to experience high-quality care that meets their rights, in line with the national Health and Social Care Standards; people should expect care that is compassionate, rights-based, respects choice and helps to realise their hopes and ambitions. It has been an important task for us to ensure the corporate plan reflects this.

Our new corporate plan highlights how, over the next few years, we will continue to transform our approach to scrutiny, assurance and improvement support. We will measure and evidence improvement in nine different areas and the plan sets out how our work will help improve the lives for people who experience care. Our information and intelligence will continue to help shape local and national policy; Our values will continue to drive all that we do; person-centred, fairness, respect, integrity, efficiency.

Through our core purpose of providing scrutiny, assurance and improvement support, our organisation is here to help others. We are here to support social care and social work, to make a contribution to our common purpose and to deliver world-class care in Scotland, based on rights and values, and to work towards an environment where every person, in every community, experiences high-quality care and support that is tailored to their rights.

The youngest children are entitled to experience care that is of the highest quality, in line with the national Health and Social Care Standards.

Peter Macleod, Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate, tells Early Years Scotland about their priorities and plans for the future.
needs and wishes. In doing this, our staff will continue to play a crucial role in protecting people, and importantly, to provide assurance of this for those who care for them, including relatives, friends and other local community networks.

As a values-based and collaborative organisation, we have an ambitious strategic vision, whilst being responsive to wider societal challenges. We will also maintain a focus on personal outcomes and the things that matter most to people. Through our business transformation, and partnership and collaboration with others, we will strengthen our work with partners to improve outcomes for people who experience care. Through the work that we do, we will continue to support the integration of health and social care and the expansion of early learning and childcare and, through collaboration, we will strengthen our work with partners to improve outcomes for people who experience care.

We will do this by maintaining our commitment to our core purpose and statutory duties and delivering three high-level strategic outcomes set out in our corporate plan. Our three strategic outcomes are: for people to experience high quality care; for people to experience positive outcomes; and, for people’s rights to be respected. These outcomes support our vision and values and positively promote equality, improved health and wellbeing and social justice for all.

Through collaboration, the Care Inspectorate will continue to transform and develop new, innovative ways in which to carry out our duties of protecting people from harm, providing assurance and supporting improvement in care. Our agenda is being shaped by changes around us, so will remain responsive to these. I look forward to working with you on our shared common purpose to improve quality of care and outcomes for people who experience care across our communities.

The Care Inspectorate’s corporate plan 2019-2022 is available on their website at careinspectorate.com
Early Years Scotland was successful in an application to the William Grant Foundation for its Step Change Award. The Award will be transformational for Early Years Scotland and will support our commitment to providing the best start in life for every child in Scotland.

As the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector experiences transformative change, we believe that online professional learning is deserving of an approach that is underpinned by Scottish Government’s ELC Expansion policy, which highlights the principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

These principles underpin our offer and delivery of online professional learning, complementing professional learning sessions we deliver across the country and in our Early Years Scotland Professional Learning Academy.

The Academy is already an integral part of the wider work of the organisation, including the delivery of ELC provision for children and families, membership support, and policy and advocacy support. Our online learning programmes are, and will be, developed in accordance with pedagogical approaches that are consistent with and appropriate for the early years workforce. This approach is integral to the development and offer of online and virtual learning programmes which are being realised through the Step Change Award.

The Ministerial Launch of the Early Years Scotland Online Learning Platform was performed by Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People, last November in our Academy. The Minister was not too far away from our virtual guests on Orkney, in the town of Ullapool, as she sent her best wishes via a pre-recorded video message.

The children from Somerset Nursery in Glasgow were on hand to cut the launch ribbon, on her behalf. We were delighted to welcome special guests who included Nick Addington, Chief Executive of the William Grant Foundation.

The huge potential of connecting virtually was showcased at the launch through the ‘virtual’ attendance by partners in Aberdeenshire, Moray and the children of Glaitness Nursery in Orkney which is managed by Mr Tulloch.

The launch enabled us to demonstrate our cutting-edge equipment, our Moodle Platform and most importantly, our ability to connect with our partners in the most northerly areas of Scotland.

**Michele Doull**, Early Years Scotland’s Head Of Professional Learning and Quality Assurance, reports on the online learning platform launch

**EYS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOES ONLINE**

Early Years Scotland • Spring 2020
The need for high quality online professional learning is captured in the following case-study from Audrey Hendry, Lead Officer Education, Aberdeenshire Council, who along with local practitioners, remotely attended the launch of the Early Years Scotland Online Learning Platform.

These evocative words from our partner unequivocally capture the need for this exciting development in the Early Years Scotland Professional Learning Academy.

In Aberdeenshire we believe that professional learning has to change. The launch of Early Years Scotland’s Professional Learning Platform marked a major change for us.

Our practitioners are no less committed to continuing professional learning than previous practitioners, however, they are different. Our practitioners live in a dynamic, fast paced, media intensive world. They are used to immediate access to information. They learn when they are travelling to work, walking the dog, exercising in the gym. Our practitioners live in a global world. They can study online with the best providers of professional learning in the world. They are trained to look outwards and have few limits on how and where they learn.

Scottish education can lead the way in supporting professional learning for our practitioners and Early Years Scotland’s online learning platform will begin to build the infrastructure and culture needed to do this.

Last November, practitioners remotely attended the Ministerial launch of Early Years Scotland’s Online Learning Platform. Those thirty practitioners attended because they wanted to mark a step change in professional learning in the North East of Scotland. Early Years Scotland has been a key partner for us for many years, but the impact it can have has been limited by the sheer size of Aberdeenshire and the varied operating models which exist. Early Years Scotland’s excellence in professional learning has been difficult to spread.

On the day, the practitioners did not mind that Aberdeenshire did not have the right audio speakers to hand during the initial test. They did not mind that the presenter on the Aberdeenshire site blocked the camera with her back until she worked out where to stand! They did not mind because they were excited about the possibilities. When the remote link switched on, everyone in the room cheered!

As soon as speakers in Glasgow started to talk, the Aberdeenshire room fell silent, in just the same way the room would if the speaker was delivering a live professional learning session. The session was engaging and stimulating. The buzz in the room for Aberdeenshire was about the possibilities it opened up, as Early Years Scotland has excellent learning opportunities.

Could it be that practitioners could join these opportunities without the additional time and costs of travelling to the central belt? Could genuine co-delivery be developed?

The session lasted the planned time and each side learned from the experience. Everyone in the room cheered when the link was closed. Some in the room had been quite sceptical that technology could deliver quality professional learning opportunities. Others had hoped that it would go well in order to show that it was possible. But by the end of the launch everyone agreed that this was the way to go forward and that an important event had occurred in front of them.

Scotland felt smaller and the possibilities for collaboration so much bigger. Aberdeenshire is proud to be involved!
Leadership of Early Learning Programme

The Leadership of Early Learning programme (LEL) is delivered by the Professional Learning and Leadership Team (PLL) at Education Scotland and is designed to support headteachers of primary schools with an early learning and childcare (ELC) setting. It’s aimed at those who are interested in developing their ability and confidence to lead learning from the early years setting into the school setting.

LEL was introduced in 2019 following the recommendations from the Siraj Review into Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland. The Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Quality Action Plan committed to creating a professional learning programme for school leadership teams on what drives quality in ELC, and how provision for children under three, sets the foundations for learning for Curriculum for Excellence. The Professional Learning and Leadership Directorate in Education Scotland was invited to develop a programme that covered key themes: effective pedagogy in early years, quality environments for early learning, partnerships and self-evaluation of quality.

The course brings together a group of headteachers and takes place over three separate learning days, with participants invited to undertake some reflective tasks between sessions. It is aimed at school leaders, who are inexperienced in leading in the early years or have become more removed from direct contact, and hope to refresh their approach to ELC.

LEL is aimed at headteachers interested in developing their ability and confidence to lead learning from the early years setting into the school setting. The programme was developed as a prototype last year, with over forty participants from all over Scotland. The content for the programme has been developed in partnership with Education Scotland staff, experienced headteachers and lecturers from the Masters in Early Years Pedagogy programmes at the University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde. The programme has had a considerable impact on the confidence of headteachers and they have reported that they were more knowledgeable and enthusiastic after having completed the LEL.

It’s vital that headteachers experience a professional learning environment where they can explore their values and beliefs and build trusting relationships, giving a confidence to admit they don’t have all the answers.

Rather than simply offering a set of learning materials, participants are signposted to further reading and sources of information and support and they are equipped with the tools to ask themselves the right questions.

Ideally, they will be able to use their new skills to share learning with their wider teams, which will further enhance the quality of ELC in their school.

The learning environment on the programme is designed to be supportive and enabling,
creating a ‘safe’ space for key themes to be discussed openly and to challenge thinking. Participants from all over Scotland are encouraged to engage in a supportive network with colleagues to explore shared issues and identify solutions.

Many headteachers said the programme gave them a different perspective. One headteacher commented on the programme: ‘I enjoyed meeting with other headteachers and have kept in contact with some. It was great to hear the different experiences that other headteachers have and it made me very appreciative of my own circumstances - a small school with fantastic children, staff and parents. I lacked confidence when dealing with the nursery but all that I learned from your course has given me the confidence to try new things. Thank you for letting me experience this.’

Keynote speakers bring their knowledge and experience of early learning and childcare and have included Sian Neil, Senior Education Officer, Education Scotland; Professor Iram Siraj, Professor of Child Development and Education, University of Oxford; Dr Marion Burns, HMI, Education Scotland; and an Early Years Scotland Director of the Board. Participants have also welcomed hearing from other headteachers who have described how their own learning has made a positive impact on children and families and being able to ask practical questions of these speakers and headteachers. Headteachers are also invited to engage in professional reading and enquiry within their own contexts between learning sessions.

Last year’s participants evaluated the prototype very positively and overall felt that the programme would have a positive impact on their children and colleagues because as leaders they were more engaged and excited about leading early years. Some also expressed that by participating in the programme they were demonstrating their commitment to early years to staff and colleagues.

Education Scotland Strategic Director Gillian Hamilton has commented, ‘It was great to see this programme take shape last year. Developed in partnership with university colleagues and headteachers, it was a really good opportunity to extend our leadership programmes and focus on leadership development opportunities in early years. Feedback received from the first cohort is already helping us shape this year’s cohort.’

The Leadership of Early Learning programme is being offered again this year, with contact days in February, March and May. Headteachers interested in taking part should contact their local authority officer with responsibility for ELC.

For more information visit: www.professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/programmes/leadership-of-early-learning/

---

Win Glow Numbers from TTS Group

TTS, suppliers of high quality, educational resources to schools and early years settings, are delighted to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a set of our illuminating Glow Numbers! The glow numbers are suitable for 3 years and up with an RRP of £59.95.

These Glow Numbers are an excellent resource for encouraging young children to understand numbers and light up their learning. The children can pair up numbers, practise their numeracy skills and create physical number lines. Ask the children to light up their number if it’s less than 5 and watch them get excited to switch the paddle on. TTS resources are designed by educational experts to meet the needs of you, the practitioner, and of the child, to help them to love learning.

For your chance to win a set of our illuminating Glow Numbers, email your name, address and name of setting (if applicable) by Friday 20 March 2020 to gwen.garner@earlyyearsscotland.org. The first entry drawn at random will receive it.

As a member of Early Years Scotland, you can also take advantage of a discount when you order resources through TTS, 15% off your first order by quoting code EY115 and 5% off all future orders using code EYSCOT20. Call TTS on 0800 318 686 or for further information please visit www.tts-shopping.com/earlyyears

The winner of the Discovery Pocket Magic Carpet was Dunkeld and Birnam Playgroup. Congratulations.
For the avoidance of doubt, child poverty in Scotland is a problem. According to the latest Scottish Government data, 240,000 of Scotland’s children are currently living in poverty - almost one in every four children in Scotland.

National government is responding to this problem - Scotland made the ambitious commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2030 through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, legislation that was passed with cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament. The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan outlines the Scottish Government’s initial action plan up to 2022. Notably, one of the new actions that is being introduced is initially being targeted at Scotland’s youngest children; by the end of 2020, low-income families with children aged under six will be £10 per week better off, per eligible child, through the introduction of the new Scottish Child Payment.

Local government is responding to the problem. In 2019, each of Scotland’s 32 local authorities published its Local Child Poverty Action Report, through which they outline what actions will be taken with local resources to tackle child poverty locally. This local programme of action is a partnership between local government and local NHS Boards, with commitments being made by both. New actions to support Scotland’s youngest children are evident to varying degrees across Scotland’s local authorities.

Child poverty is not a minor matter. However, it is very much a matter for minors. How then should Early Years Scotland, and the practitioners it represents, respond to the problem? Here, we share three key learning points and identify three action points.

What practitioners need to know

We need to know that young children are at heightened risk of poverty. Children are more likely to experience poverty than adults. The risk of poverty is particularly high for Scotland’s youngest children; the Scottish Government identified six priority groups of children against which local and national anti-poverty action should be targeted (Figure 1). Although households with children in the early learning and childcare (ELC) sector are not specifically identified as one of these six priority groups of children, we know that some of those groups who are targeted are more likely to have children in this age group. For example, the majority of young mothers in Scotland are living in poverty (56%) and these family households are more likely than family households as a whole, to comprise younger children. Households with a child aged under one are also one of the priority groups (Figure 1). Of particular concern is that there seems to be an emerging regressive trend with the proportion of young mothers living in poverty increasing significantly in recent years (Figure 2).

More positively, we need to know that the ELC sector is understood to be part of the solution for tackling parents’ poverty. The extension of ELC entitlement to 1,140 hours per year is, in no small part, an attempt to make it easier for parents to work, train or study. Notwithstanding the reality that the majority of Scotland’s children who live in poverty are living in a household in which someone works, the expansion of ELC in Scotland, could be a vital cog in the machine that enables families to escape poverty through adequately remunerated work.

We also need to know that quality ELC provision can be part of the long-term solution to prevent today’s youngest children who are living in poverty become the next generation of adults living in poverty. The Scottish Government has acknowledged the attainment gap in schools between pupils from the most and least deprived backgrounds and has introduced the Attainment Challenge to work towards eradicating this gap. Similarly, quality ELC provision must be viewed as part of wider work to narrow the attainment gap that emerges prior to children starting school. This is not an argument in favour of testing or the extension of the 3Rs into early years settings, as we understand the importance of embracing play-based pedagogy when children are in high quality ELC provision and early primary.

Three quick priority points - What the early years sector needs to do

First, the early years sector needs to be aware of Scotland’s commitment to eradicate child poverty and the scale of the

---

**CHILD POVERTY: MINOR MATTER OR MATTER FOR MINORS?**

John H. McKendrick, Professor in Social Justice, The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University, looks at how high quality ELC provision can be part of the long-term solution to child poverty in Scotland.
challenge. This means familiarisation with both national and local plans to tackle child poverty.

Second, the early years sector needs to raise awareness of the critical importance of its contribution to tackling child poverty. For example, it needs to make clear that a well-resourced and effective ELC sector is both a short-term intervention (enabling parents to escape poverty through work) and a long-term solution (laying the foundations with young children for the narrowing of the attainment gap).

Third, the early years sector needs to ask difficult questions about the nature and impact of its provision. Extending provision without strategic prioritisation of resource or a 'business as usual' approach will not be transformative.

As a starter for five, we need to consider: (i) is the type of learning in ELC settings sustaining, exacerbating or narrowing attainment gaps? (ii) is the way in which the 1,140 hours is provided enabling parents to access just reward in the labour market? (iii) is the ELC workforce inclined to view its work as anti-poverty action? (iv) can the extension of free meal entitlement in ELC avoid the problems of low uptake that has blighted its provision among school age children? and (v) how effective as an anti-poverty intervention is the extended provision of ELC for eligible two years olds? These are complex issues that require critical analysis and a measured response. We should be bold and confident in strengthening the commitment of the early years sector to tackle child poverty. Identifying a need to improve is not recognition of past failure. It might be argued that it is not the purpose of the early years sector to tackle child poverty. On the other hand, tackling child poverty is everyone’s business and Scotland needs its early years practitioners to make a positive contribution if the goal of eradicating child poverty in Scotland by 2030 is to be realised.

• Email: jmke@gcu.ac.uk
Early Years Scotland • Spring 2020

For over 26 years, TASK Childcare Family Support and Learning Centre has positioned itself in the community as an organisation that provides first class early learning and childcare (ELC) facilities for over 100 families daily whilst offering a range of family learning and support to individuals and community groups. Through tirelessly aspiring to meet the needs of the local community, the project successfully secured Big Lottery Funding to refurbish an old nursery school within the Gorbals Community.

The funding has allowed the project to successfully create a ‘centre of excellence’ that provides high quality affordable ELC which is accessible, flexible and fully inclusive. Also housed within the centre is a range of family wellbeing and support services to meet the needs of all services users. TASK provides opportunities predominantly for families living within Gorbals. By offering this flexible service to families, barriers are removed, and employment, training and other opportunities become more accessible.

The service has an ethos of family learning and provides a wide range of education and support services to our service users and to the wider community. By doing this, we improve self-esteem, confidence, resilience and the wellbeing of children and their families. The service works collaboratively with many partner organisations, both statutory and voluntary.

TASK Childcare offers the following services within the centre:

- Pre-school nursery provision
- Out of school care service
- Early intervention and prevention team
- Family learning and wellbeing programmes

Before the inspection

Inspections are a hugely important way to highlight the quality of the work that we do consistently, demonstrate the plans that the organisation has for continuous improvement, and share all our achievements. The management team at TASK feel that the inspection process is a shared aim which is to improve outcomes for our families through the delivery of quality of early learning and care for children. The team also believe that the process should be fair, consistent and transparent and the outcome should accurately reflect the quality of the service.

As professionals we continuously review and evaluate our service and therefore there should be no need to make any special preparations for an inspection. However, realistically our staff team like most practitioners before an inspection, reflected on:

- how well we meet the needs of the range of children in our care
- the environment, wall displays and the ‘talking thinking floor books’
- current policies and procedures

An early indication that the inspection is imminent is the receiving of the ‘parent and carer/questionnaires’ and on this occasion our questionnaires were received sometime before the inspection took place. Our staff team have regular self-evaluation meetings and during the scheduled meeting after receiving the questionnaires, practitioners were reminded of what to expect during an inspection i.e. the knowledge and implementation of all principles and requirements of the Care Inspectorate.

Staff members all indicated that they felt slightly nervous before the inspection, but the consensus of opinion...
was that they felt confident in their own practice. Our staff team all receive a high level of training and in terms of self-evaluation, they benefit from our monthly evaluation meetings, all of which raises staff morale, instilling confidence, knowledge and motivation.

During the inspection
The inspection appeared relaxed and friendly which was down to the fact the inspector had been involved in the last three inspections which demonstrates consistency. Building positive relationships with Care Inspectorate inspectors whose statutory duty is to further improve the quality of services is instrumental in developing effective communication. A staff member within the ‘wiggles & gigglers’ (0-2 years) commented ‘the inspection was non-intrusive. I thought the inspector was friendly and responded well to the children. The inspector understood the challenge with settling a child and offered to hold him for a short time’. On this occasion the inspector demonstrated the supportive role they also play during an inspection.

The positive approach that the inspector had towards the staff had a huge influence on the performance of the practitioners during the inspection. A further comment from a practitioner within the ‘movers & shakers’ (2-3 years) was ‘the inspector commented on what they liked, and all questions were supportive and positive’. Our confident children were relaxed with the inspector who observed them both indoors and outdoors.

Senior Management had ensured that practitioners had the confidence to challenge any comment they felt was not reflective of their practice. This occurred during the inspection and a practitioner was able to demonstrate that the correct procedures were in fact in place.

After the inspection
A sense of relief was experienced by the team after the inspection which was coupled with a sense of achievement. The Care Inspectorate inspector gave extremely positive feedback to Senior Management.

Comments from our inspector

Quality of Care and Support:
Grade awarded 6

‘The ethos is about children and families.’
‘Staff know the children very well.’
‘Personal profiles quite comprehensive although they don’t do justice to what we are doing.’
‘Really comprehensive transitions working well.’
‘Baby room children really engaged, giggling, having fun.’
‘Remarkably calm, happy and settled children.’
‘Very good child protection process in place.’
‘Very good personal plans for children.’

Quality of Environment:
Grade awarded 5

‘Whole ethos is great.’
‘Lots of space.’
‘Lift access.’
‘Forest Kindergarten.’
‘Nice defined areas.’
‘Even better than the last time.’
‘Lots of resources and lots happening.’

The inspector also shared the excellent feedback received from our families. The wellbeing of our children and their families is at the heart of all that we do. We value the positive relationships and partnership that we have with our parents/carers all of which is based on trust.

On reflection
Our staff team were delighted with the grades that were awarded and showed real enthusiasm to strive and sustain the high grades. Reflecting on the visit, practitioners expressed the view that whilst they appreciated that due to the logistics the visit was a snapshot of playroom experiences, they said that it would have been more advantageous if the inspector had allocated more time to be curious about the children’s learning. Our ‘floor books’ were highlighted as being an example of meriting more time. These reflective books create a child centred approach that evidences the process of play and the learning that comes with it. Furthermore, the books evidence our achievements and the ongoing creativity that occurs within the playrooms. Spending more time with practitioners would also build on the positive relationships that have already been established.

However, the outcome has certainly motivated the whole team to strive for even more improvement. Staff felt that the overall success of our inspection was due to the friendly approach of the Care Inspectorate and the continuity of inspectors.
Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Early Years Scotland’s work with Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Programme continues to go from strength to strength. Since starting work in our first prison, HMP Dumfries eight years ago, Early Years Scotland now works with six prisons; HMP Barlinnie, HMP Low Moss, HMP Greenock, HMP Edinburgh, HMP Castle Huntly and HMP Cornton Vale.

The Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Programme has two strands; Fathers’ Programme / Mothers’ Programme and Learning Together Through Play sessions. Our sessions for fathers and children have been funded since April 2019 by the National Lottery, Robertson Trust and the Charles Hayward Foundation, with funding in place for three years. The sessions we deliver to support mothers have been funded by The Volant Trust, Foundation Scotland for the past two and a half years. We are extremely grateful to our funders, whose support enables Early Years Scotland to continue this extremely vital work to ensure children and families are fully supported.

Early Years Scotland works in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service to support individuals in prison, their children and their families. Families are provided with opportunities to build and improve attachments, to help ensure relationships are maintained/improved, which can in turn lead to more positive outcomes for their children. The sessions can support children and families through the following support interventions:
• Pre-visit Session for children and families
• Family Play Sessions
• Baby Massage Programmes
• Mothers’ Programme / Arts and Crafts Session
• Fathers’ Programme and Fathers’ Forum
• Awareness Raising Sessions with prison staff and other agencies
• Signposting to other support agencies.

The Early Years Scotland Programmes
The Fathers’/Mothers’ Programme involves a qualified Early Years Scotland Early Years Practitioner working with mothers and fathers who are imprisoned and have children aged five and under. Participation in the programme can increase their knowledge and understanding of, for example, the importance of play, healthy living, positive behaviour management, communication, child development and brain development. Within both programmes, fathers and mothers also have the opportunity to engage in practical play experiences, which builds knowledge and confidence to support later engagement with their child at the Family Play Session or an Arts and Crafts Session, or when sending crafts home to their child.

During Baby Massage, parents and babies enjoy and benefit from valuable learning experiences such as relaxation for baby, relief of colic and building attachments between parent and child.

Feedback received from families and prison staff who have participated in the Early Years Scotland Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Programmes, highlights the following benefits:

• Improved relationships between prisoners and their children.
• Increased confidence and self-esteem, with prisoners and children actively learning together.
• Fun and laughter with loved ones despite challenging circumstances.
• Parents’ support for each other and developing friendships.

The Family Visitor Centre in HMP Low Moss provides a place for families and friends to relax before their visit.

Early Years Scotland Family Visitor Centre
The Early Years Scotland Family Visitor Centre in HMP Low Moss is a place for families and friends to relax before their visit. It provides opportunities to access independent and impartial advice and information to support prisoners’ families. Early Years Scotland works in partnership with HMP Low Moss in the provision of this invaluable experience.

We are extremely proud to be a key partner in the delivery of this service as it greatly benefits children and families affected by parental imprisonment. Our staff within the Family Visitor Centre have considerable experience of working with children and families and are available to assist with any questions no matter how big or small.

We are tremendously grateful to the Scottish Government and Children in Need, who both fund this much needed service within HMP Low Moss.

Evaluating Learning Together Through Play

Early Years Scotland, with funding support from the William Grant Foundation, and the Medical Research Council/Chief Scientist Office Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, are co-funding a PhD student, Jessica Moran (pictured), to evaluate the Learning Together Through Play programme for fathers in prison and their young children. The programme has two parts: (1) a group session with fathers, delivered by an Early Years Practitioner which focuses on child development, and (2) a play-focused family visit, where children can spend time with their father and family.

Over the last two years, Jessica has spent a significant amount of time in HMP Barlinnie and HMP Low Moss being an ‘honorary dad’ in both the fathers’ groups and play-focused family visits, to be able to understand how the programme works. Jessica has also completed questionnaires to record any measurable changes in fathers’ attitudes or beliefs about parenting post participation in the programme.

Finally, Jessica has interviewed fathers, Early Years Scotland staff, and Scottish Prison Service staff, to understand their experience of the Learning Together Through Play Programme.

The next stage in Jessica’s PhD will be to analyse the data collected, identify key themes and write up her final PhD thesis. She will also be writing up briefings and making short films to share the findings of the research with a wider audience. We are extremely excited to be part of this exciting project and look forward to reading Jessica’s findings and recommendations.
Our 2 Stay Play and Learn service offers a two generational, play-based approach to support children and families. These sessions provide families with eligible two-year-old children up to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) through a programme of family learning and engagement. Our alternative approach to nursery provision, where parents stay with their children, supports transformational change for many children and families.

Before the inspection
This was our first inspection. We knew it was imminent as we had received our Care Inspectorate Questionnaires in May 2019. We were very excited for the opportunity to showcase all the hard work and effort we had put into developing the service and providing a rich nurturing learning environment.

I have worked for Early Years Scotland for nearly three years and have been based within 2 Stay Play and Learn since November 2018. Over the previous six months I had been given more opportunities to develop my own leadership qualities before taking up the post as Project Manager. We were feeling positive about our service and about receiving feedback on our progress and achievements. We planned to use this to self-evaluate effectively and improve, in order to ensure the best outcomes for all our families.

During the inspection
Our inspector arrived on Friday 15 November 2019. I was on annual leave, but my Line Manager Fiona Carmichael and our staff team were there. On Fridays, we offer a drop in Stay Play and Learn session...
for children aged 0-5 as well as our regular children and families. This helps us to build links with the local community and gives us an opportunity to introduce the service to parents whose children are under two.

Our inspector spent some time before the start of the session asking questions and building her understanding of our unique service and how we differ from traditional nursery establishments. She was very friendly and supportive and put staff at ease and offered valuable feedback and knowledge. She spoke with parents and gathered their thoughts, asking them what they thought of the service and what they valued, and how it had benefited their family. As with all our sessions, we give full autonomy to children and their families to choose the learning experiences that they participate in and enjoy together. We firmly believe that all parents and carers should be fully involved in their child’s learning and development. Throughout the sessions, children experience a plethora of play and learning experiences, enjoy a healthy snack and engage in songs and stories. Parents are able to give and receive support from one another about parenting matters.

Due to my annual leave on inspection day, it was agreed that the inspector would return on the Monday to meet me, look over our paperwork in more depth and give feedback. The feedback was very informative and exceptionally positive. As a staff team and as an organisation, this was a very exciting time as our efforts and achievements had been recognised and validated.

After the inspection

On receiving our grades, we shared the news with a member of the team who had recently left, acknowledging that their valued input contributed to such a positive first inspection.

On reflection

Although initially feeling apprehensive, the inspection was a positive experience which enabled us to highlight our hard work and commitment to the families we support. I think it has really helped to focus our team on how we can collectively move forwards and aim for higher grades, but more importantly, give our children and families an even better experience that helps them in the longer term.

Next steps for improvement

We immediately began to implement the helpful suggestions from our inspector, and were proud to share some examples of our work with the Care Inspectorate.

We want to continue working with our partners within the Drumchapel Health Visiting team, who have been a key source of information when identifying families who may be eligible to use the service, therefore addressing potential barriers to engagement.

Finally, we are piloting a new Professional Development Award for the parents in our sessions and are about to offer the first module which is entitled Personal Development - Self and Community. We hope this will support our parents to develop and enhance their own learning and development, which will ultimately benefit their children’s outcomes in the longer term.

Quality of Care and Support
5: Very Good
Quality of Staffing
5: Very Good
Quality of Environment
5: Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership
5: Very Good

Some feedback

‘Children were encouraged to make decisions about their day-to-day experiences. We observed happy confident children having lots of fun as they played and took part in a range of activities that challenged and excited them.’

‘Staff had created an environment that helped nurture children and enabled them to enjoy themselves and have fun. We watched the staff praise, support and encourage children. Their warmth and kindness enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure.’

‘The manager supported staff to develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to be reflective practitioners and build on their confidence to take forward a shared vision. We found that the staff were enthusiastic and highly motivated.’
The benefits of storytelling

Sharing books and telling stories are not only fabulous ways to improve imagination, concentration and listening skills. Spending time together like this builds a relationship between adult and child. I have met many people whose eyes light up when they remember a parent or other family member reading, telling or simply making up stories for them as children. These are some of the warmest memories a child carries with them their whole lives.

Stories help children rehearse for real life. By trying out a whole range of experiences through a story, they are preparing to meet similar challenges in real life. Stories help children explore the whole range of emotions, learn about values and morals and so start to build their own inner self. They practise testing out through their own emotional responses to situations and characters in stories, how the world is and how they respond to it.

Storytelling builds relationships, provides vocabulary, grows the imagination and emotional development. It develops listening skills because stories are interesting to follow. We all want to know ‘what happens’ so we will listen for the ending. The ability to concentrate and listen to one voice speaking is a crucial skill for young children to master when they arrive at school. Conversation develops through simple questioning and talking about or even re-telling the story.

By far the best way to teach children listening skills is to be a good listener yourself. Everyone needs and values someone listening to them in a complete and focused way; listening without interrupting, judging or thinking about something else, allows the person to express themselves, to find their words. Listening in this way is the most valuable gift you can give a child. Even a few minutes here and there can make all the difference. Good listening demonstrated to a child is infectious.

Storytelling takes many forms. For instance, when you show family photographs to a child and talk about the people, events and places in the photo, this is storytelling. The first photo of a baby - there are the stories of where and when the baby was born, why they were given that particular name, incidents that happened. The same with photos of pets, holidays, special events. These kinds of stories can be told again and again to children who never tire of hearing about them.

When you are walking around the area where you live, and you describe what the buildings or farms or industries are or were, this is local history in storytelling. The ordinary world you walk or drive around has layers of stories. There was not always a shopping centre and a new road. What was there before? Maybe you know of an older relative or a neighbour who knows. Often it is the details that children love.

Many children love made-up stories. Some of us have grown up with an adult who would make things up for us and we have learnt to do it from them. Others say, ‘Oh I can’t do that I have no imagination.’ It’s really not a difficult thing to learn to do and again, stories don’t have to be long. I teach people to make stories up that last 10 seconds. You need a starting point - what or who is the story about, could be a teddy for...
The benefits of storytelling

Storytelling takes many forms. For instance, when you show family photographs to a child and talk about the people, events and places in the photo, this is storytelling.

Give it a name, the first one that comes into your head is the best. Now try giving this teddy an unusual ability, for instance maybe it can grant wishes or make itself invisible. This is the start of a story. You can say to a child, ‘and then what do you think happened?’ Between the two of you, you can have a lot of fun playing with this idea. These stories don’t have to be long either.

The fairy tales that you heard as a child such as Snow White, Cinderella, or The Three Bears you can retell in your own way. These are stories that we hear so often as children, you would probably only have to look through a book of the story briefly to remind yourself of the sequence of the story and then have a go! It’s true that when a story is told without a book there is more eye contact and intimacy. Yet if you aren’t ready for that, simply by holding the book at the side, so that you and your child can both look fully at each other’s faces and see the book is a half way stage between reading and telling and has many of the benefits of both.

Another marvellous thing about oral storytelling is that you are free to improvise, adapt, make up, change, abbreviate, edit and generally play around with the story and its language. It is creative, playful and with young children it is lovely to make words, languages and stories fun. This is what many nursery rhymes and riddles are doing, playing around with the sound of words. In fact, nursery rhymes are a simple form of storytelling. Whichever type of storytelling you experiment and play with, I hope you find the magic and pleasure telling tales can bring with the young children you are playing with or bringing up.

Visit: www.transformationalplay.net

Storytelling builds relationships, provides vocabulary, grows the imagination and emotional development.
Music is all around us and is part of our culture. Children can be exposed to music in many different ways, for example, through radio and television, celebrations and films and it can become part of our daily lives. Children will experience enjoyment by taking part in musical activities whether it is listening to different types of music, singing, dancing or playing an instrument.

How often have you put some music on to encourage your child to go to sleep? Music can soothe children and young babies and often quiet background music is used for this purpose. Sometimes you may be using music with your child but may not realise it. You may use music to calm your child, to show happiness and to talk to your child. These are all natural ways to have music as part of your daily routine.

By involving your child in musical activities you are helping them to develop important skills. Music can help your child to express their feelings and emotions, especially if they have not yet developed the appropriate language skills. It also helps them to express their feelings and emotions by singing, dancing and clapping.

Encouraging your child to listen to music helps them to learn new sounds and the meaning of words. The repetition of nursery rhymes and songs helps them to memorise and repeat words they hear and this is a fun way for them to expand their vocabulary.

Listening skills are developed and your child will be more able to differentiate between different sounds.

Music also helps to develop your child’s memory skills. Quite often children will repeat songs or rhymes without really having a full understanding of the meaning. A catchy tune that is repeated will help them to remember sequences and events.

Children can enjoy music both individually and as part of a group. By being part of a group they are learning to share, listen and co-operate with each other. Moving, dancing, singing and playing simple instruments are all physical activities that encourage your child to move their body and use their voice.

Top Tips for Parents

HAVE FUN WITH MUSIC

You don’t have to be musical to encourage your child to enjoy music. By encouraging your child to listen to music as well as sing and move to music, you are helping to develop their mind and body.
HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU ENJOY AND MAKE MUSIC WITH YOUR CHILD

Enjoicing music

Listen to stories on CDs where music forms part of the story. There are recordings that tell the story of a piece of music such as 'Peter and the Wolf'.

Listen to some classical music and try picking out what the music is representing such as cannon fire in the '1812 Overture' or goblins dancing 'In the Hall of the Mountain King'.

Try to let your child hear all sorts of music. Ask them how it makes them feel or get them to draw a picture of what it makes them think about. A variation on this is to use a large piece of paper, perhaps the back of wallpaper, and a felt pen and let your child draw the kind of lines the music inspires; jaggy, straight, wavy or swirls.

Make music

Re-tell favourite stories making your own sound effects. You can use instruments or just objects from around the house to create your sounds.

Beat out rhythms in time to a song or piece of music using household objects such as a wooden spoon on a pot lid or simply beat hands on the floor or table.

Clap hands to the beat of a tune. This is great fun if the tune gets quicker and quicker as in the 'Sailor’s Hornpipe'.

You can make simple shakers with your child by filling an empty plastic bottle with dried peas or lentils or perhaps old beads or buttons. Glue the top before screwing it back on so that your child cannot access these small objects. It’s interesting to use different fillings in the bottles and compare the sounds.

Upturned pots or plastic bowls make great drums when beaten with wooden or plastic spoons.

Tap the open ends of two plastic tubs or cups together to make the sound of horses' hooves or to imitate the sound of castanets.

A simple guitar can be made by slipping elastic bands around an empty tissue box and plucking the bands over the hole. You may have ideas of your own of how to make other simple percussion instruments.

Sing and move

Nursery rhymes help to develop your child’s sense of rhythm and help them begin to understand about rhyming words, which is helpful when learning to read. Enjoy saying or singing them together.

Action songs are great fun to sing together. Your child will already know some from nursery and others from watching children’s TV.

You or your child might have a karaoke machine that they can enjoy singing along with, but you can just as easily encourage them to join in the songs in their favourite TV programmes.

Access to music

Search YouTube to find all songs or pieces of music mentioned plus many more. You can listen to music together on an iPod, phone, radio, tablet, CD or computer. Bargain bookshops sell very cheap nursery rhyme books or find them on the internet if you have access.

As an Early Years Scotland member your nursery can find nursery rhyme/action song booklets for parents on the website. Libraries lend CDs and DVDs as well as books.

Hopefully these suggestions have sparked some ideas of your own. Have fun trying them with your child.

This information comes from one of Early Years Scotland’s series of Top Tips for Parents which are available for individual members and group members to download from the ‘MY EYS’ members’ area of our website earlyyearsScotland.org.

MUSIC HELPS CHILDREN TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS BY SINGING, DANCING AND CLAPPING
Solving your problems!

The membership area of our website provides a rich source of essential information to help you to manage your setting.

Q) How do I gain access to the membership area of the website?

A) You will have received a confirmatory email when you joined Early Years Scotland or a renewal email if you are already a member. All the information you need to access the membership area, which is known as My EYS, is in the email. If you need further help you can contact our telephone helpline on 0141 221 4148 or email info@earlyyearsscotland.org.

Q) How do I renew my membership?

A) We will send you an email one month before your membership is due to expire. It will be sent to the named contact in your setting or to you if you are an individual member. Reminder emails will be sent if necessary. The renewal email message will contain a link which will take you directly to the membership renewal application information.

Q) What kind of information is available in the membership area of the website?

A) We have a resource library which contains an extensive range of policies and templates, which members can download and adapt for their own early learning and childcare setting. When logged in to the My EYS members’ area, click ‘View All Documents’ to see the full range that is available. You will also be able to download copies of previous editions of both of our magazines - Early Years Scotland: Magazine for Early Years Professionals and Parent Chat magazine. Please note that access to all the documents will vary according to your membership category.

The members’ area of our website contains an extensive range of sample policies, templates and useful publications

Here is one example of the kind of topic that the membership area of the website can help you with:

Q) How do I go about making sure our setting’s social networking is safe?

A) Early Years Scotland’s Social Networking Guidance on how to manage the use of the internet and social networking sites will help you to do this. Here is the introduction:

Social networking can help settings to engage with members, potential members and staff, and can help to promote the organisation. Many organisations have their own Facebook pages, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and blogs and invite employees and members to upload comments, tweets and articles to promote an exchange of ideas. Individual staff members are often encouraged to sign up to LinkedIn and other professional networking sites.

However, there are certain risks and challenges for organisations using social media. They need to be able to make constructive use of new communication methods, whilst avoiding employment law and HR battles if they misuse it. The increase in use of social and business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, can cause management and HR problems because of the clash that privacy, confidentiality and free speech have with business objectives and reputations. The negative publicity that can result from high-profile legal cases is unwelcome to employers.

In addition if an employee’s use of new media is haphazard it can create serious problems for managers and what they post can potentially undermine the organisation’s reputation or the individual employment relationship. Some posts may also amount to bullying and harassment. It is vital that settings are prepared for using social networking sites.

• Visit: www.earlyyears.org
Michele Doull, Early Years Scotland’s Head of Professional Learning and Quality Assurance, brings you up to date with news from Early Years Scotland’s Professional Learning Academy and reflects on how we learn.

It has been a busy time for the Early Years Scotland Professional Learning Academy since our last edition. You will see from the article on page 10 that we were delighted to have held the Ministerial launch of our Online Learning Platform last November. Our first online course is Supporting Meaningful Parental Engagement, a topic which we believe everyone involved in the ELC sector actively strives to enhance.

The launch followed on quickly from our hugely successful Annual National Conference in September. The focus of my input at the conference was the recognition and need to apply theory and thinking around how we engage with our youngest children, to how we engage with adults. My intention was to encourage reflection on how we as adults learn and why this does not have to be so different from our understanding of how our youngest children learn.

I sought to question the view that children learn differently from adults. One view proposes that there are key differences in how children and adults learn; adults need to be self-directed in their learning due to a shift in their dependency on others, with adults having a ‘vast reservoir of experience’ which increases and improves through ‘experiential techniques’ (Webster et al, 2001). The question arises, is this so different for young children? Should the question focus more upon what is the learning personality of an individual? Just as we have a unique social personality, the combination of, for example, personal interest or how an individual processes information, creates an individual learning personality.

Valuing the learning personalities of the professionals who attend an Early Years Scotland professional learning session is a hugely important consideration in our delivery and is embedded in our approach. This approach has been seen in the many sessions we have delivered in the last few months. Our Academy is fast becoming a hub of activity and we have welcomed colleagues from a number of local authorities. We were delighted that last December our first cohort of practitioners from Glasgow City Council completed a bespoke nine session induction programme.

The Professional Learning Team has also been delivering sessions across the country with, for example, sessions focusing upon leadership in early years being delivered for Moray Council and outdoor sessions being delivered in the woods within Inverclyde Council. These are just two examples of sessions which value and celebrate the learning personalities of wonderful professionals who strive to deliver high quality early learning and childcare.

Practitioners from Glasgow City Council are pictured with Early Years Scotland’s Professional Learning Manager, Jane Malcolm (far left), after completing a bespoke nine session induction programme at the end of last year.

The EYS smartphone app has details of all upcoming professional learning sessions and allows you to book your place. Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for Early Years Scotland.
Early Years Scotland has responded to the Scottish Government’s ‘Children’s Rights: Consultation on incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into our domestic law in Scotland’.

The consultation featured a series of questions under three themes:

• legal mechanisms for incorporating the UNCRC into domestic law
• embedding children’s rights in public services
• enabling compatibility and remedies.

Here are some of our comments and responses to the questions asked:

Early Years Scotland welcomes the proposal to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law and the Scottish Government’s commitment to protecting and advancing the rights of Scotland’s children and young people. The realisation of rights can have a positive impact on children in their early years, with the potential to ultimately improve their outcomes and life experiences overall.

Q. Do you agree that the framework for incorporation should include a ‘duty to comply’ with the UNCRC rights?

Early Years Scotland would broadly support a duty to comply with UNCRC rights, in line with the approach currently taken under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA).

Q. Do you agree that it is best to push forward now with the incorporation of the UNCRC before the development of a Statutory Human Rights Framework for Scotland?

Early Years Scotland would agree with plans to push forward now with the incorporation of the UNCRC before the development of a statutory human rights framework for Scotland.

Q. What is your preferred model for incorporating the UNCRC into domestic law?

Early Years Scotland wholeheartedly supports the intention to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. There are, however, concerns as to what this will actually entail from an early years perspective as much of the policy and practice which currently exists within early learning and childcare (ELC) is derived from the principles of the UNCRC, for example GIRFEC and the SHANARRI indicators included within. Concerns have been raised amongst practitioners as to what will happen to these existing principles, and as such, the resulting policy and practice which underpins the delivery of ELC in Scotland, depending on how the UNCRC is incorporated into domestic law. It is, therefore, essential to strike a balance between that which already exists, and that which requires to be developed and implemented.

Q. Do you think that a requirement for the Scottish Government to produce a Children’s Rights Scheme, similar to the Welsh example, should be included in this legislation?

Early Years Scotland would welcome the creation of a Children’s Rights Scheme, similar to that which has been created and implemented in Wales.

Q. Do you agree that the Bill should contain a regime which allows rights holders to challenge acts of public authorities on the grounds that they are incompatible with the rights provided for in the Bill?

Early Years Scotland believes it is essential that children, or those acting on behalf of children, are able to seek appropriate redress for harm caused in instances where they believe their rights have been violated.

5 NATIONS STATEMENT

The 5 Nations Early Years support organisations in the UK and Ireland: Early Childhood Ireland, Early Years Alliance, Early Years Scotland and Early Years Wales, issued a Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC.

‘We are proud to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on 20th November 2019 and congratulate all who have respected and adopted it, incorporating it into everyday life. All 5 Early Years organisations hold the UNCRC at the heart of our work in aiming for every child to have the best possible start in life and to be able to thrive and reach their full potential.’

• To read the full 5 Nations Statement visit: www.earlyyearsscotland.org/about-us/five-nations-summit
Equality is at the heart of everyone’s human rights. We asked three guest contributors for their thoughts.

Race Equality
Khadija Mohammed, SFHEA, Senior Lecturer in Education, Programme Leader: BA (Hons) Childhood Studies/Graduate Apprenticeship, Early Learning and Childcare, The University of The West of Scotland, asks if race has fallen off the agenda.

It is vital that we have some honest conversations about race. It is difficult for many because there are misunderstandings, assumptions and a range of strong emotions at play. Our early years settings have become more diverse and yet we still find that even the most well-intentioned practitioners feel unprepared to deal with issues related to race. This could be due to a number of reasons. There is often a complacency, or perhaps a nervousness, to discuss race for fear of being politically incorrect or, more seriously, there is a reluctance to challenge one’s own underlying, negative assumptions. However, honest, open dialogues on race can be very powerful in heightening consciousness about some of the issues and serve to improve our understanding of it. There is a need to encourage practitioners to engage in critical conversations around social justice and equality.

Gender Diversity and Early Years
Fergus McMillan, Senior Equality and Diversity Advocate, Skills Development Scotland, highlights the establishment of the new Gender Commission.

So why haven’t we made more progress with this area of equality? After all, the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970, nearly 50 years ago. Occupational segregation (women concentrated in occupations associated with lower pay) is one element of the Gender Pay Gap. Skills Development Scotland has facilitated the establishment of a Gender Commission, set up in response to a discussion at the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) Group Board. The work complements existing activity on occupational segregation in the workplace and will be the first of its kind to do so specifically through the lens of apprenticeships.

The first thematic meeting was hosted by Early Years Scotland. There are two elements to look at in the context of early years, the first about the diversification of the workforce to include more men and the second the potential to challenge outdated notions of “what you would like to be when you grow up?” with children.

The SAAB Gender Commission has been established with members drawn from employers, education, trade union and parent representatives. The Gender Commission’s Chair is Natalie Buxton, Managing Director, Scotland, Weber Shandwick, and Jean Carwood-Edwards, CEO of Early Years Scotland, is a Commissioner. The Commission will run for 18 months and report in Spring 2021.

Keeping LGBT+ Inequality on the Agenda
Shaddai Tembo, Research Student at the University of the West of Scotland, stresses the importance of maintaining a focus on LGBT+ inequality.

Given the increasing attention paid to challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender diversity, it’s important that we keep LGBT+ inclusive education on the agenda too. The current inequality numbers for LGBT+ children are dreadful in terms of bullying and discrimination in schools. This is situated within a recent history of education policy which was deliberately discriminatory against LGBT+ people (Section 28). Yet many have taken issue with the need to teach this in early learning and childcare (ELC), namely because of concerns that by talking about sexual orientation, we are talking about sex. This is obviously not the case. To teach LGBT+ inclusive education is to teach about inclusion, it is to teach about diversity, it is to teach that people should never experience discrimination or prejudice because of their sexual orientation. This is often seen as risky business, but we cannot afford not to if we are serious about addressing inequalities in ELC. Let’s do it!

• @CriticalEYears on Twitter.
Melodie Crumlin, CEO of The Judy Murray Foundation describes the benefits of getting alongside your child during sport.

Parents are the most important part of the story of introducing children to sport and physical activity. Encouraging your child to be active from an early age is vital if they are to develop healthy habits and interests and the natural way for children to develop the relevant skills and interests is through play.

It is important parents get involved in this process as the child’s first educator. Having a young child myself, I have found that being active together has allowed us to bond and spend quality time together. It has also developed my daughter’s agility, balance and co-ordination and it has allowed her to develop her communication and leadership skills as she enjoys making up new sporty games, which she teaches me and other family members.

There are many simple and fun games you can play with your child. The equipment needed will almost certainly already be in your home or garden. You do not need a sports club space or specialised shoes or clothing. The best games are usually the ones you and your child make up.

Judy Murray, JMF founder and trustee says: ‘My kids were always really active and as a family we became pretty good at creating our own games both in the house, the backyard and the garden. I remember playing balloon tennis across the sofa in our living room and kitchen table tennis with cereal boxes for the net and biscuit tin lids for bats. It is all about using what you have, making up your own rules, and scoring systems. All parents need are some basic, everyday objects, a child who wants to play and someone who wants to play with them. It is that straightforward!’

Therefore, why not try, ‘Jump the River’, one of the games developed by Judy? Let the fun begin!

JUMP THE RIVER
This simple game can develop running, jumping, balance and sending/receiving skills and you will have great fun with your child, learning without even realising.

☑ Make a river by placing two pieces of string, rope or anything else that can create a riverbank. To bring the story to life, take some of your child’s soft toys and place them in the river.
☑ Have your child stand on one side of the river and jump across it.
☑ Create different ways for your child to jump… off two legs, land on one, swap legs, jump off one, land on the other etc.
☑ Let them dream up ideas on how they could jump. Turning in mid-air is always a favourite.
☑ If they find it easier, make the river wider.
☑ Once they have the hang of this, you can ask them to take a run and then jump the river.
☑ Dream up a story, running through the jungle, jump the river and land on the island, which will also process their communication and imagination skills.

☑ Once they are balancing, throw them a soft toy, a small football/play ball or anything that will challenge them to use both hands to catch.
☑ Have them throw the ball back then throw the item to different sides of the body and at all heights. This is perfect for challenging their eye-hand coordination and balance.
☑ If you have a small bat or racket, have them run, jump, land, hold it up and throw them a ball to volley down to a target. Use one of their toys as a target and make up another part to the story.
☑ At this stage, ask your child how they would like to progress it. They will come up with so many creative ideas. Oh, make sure you take your turn of running and jumping, your child will love throwing things at you!

My kids were always really active and as a family we became pretty good at creating our own games both in the house, the backyard and the garden. Judy Murray
BOOKS FOR EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS

Jenny Carey, Course Leader for the Early Years Masters Degree at The University of Strathclyde, and Early Years Scotland’s resident book reviewer, covers the topics of the relationships we build with children and also what it means to be a professional in the early years.


Early learning and childcare (ELC) policy puts open receptive relationships between educators and young children at the heart of a caring and playful approach to learning. As early years practitioners we understand that relationships matter, but how does building a relational approach fit with pedagogy?

This book is a seminal text. It makes the case that the relationships we build with children can make the difference to how they see themselves as learners. Published over a decade ago, it could be argued that it lacks relevance to the current educational landscape. I disagree; it not only provides a clear overview of what relational pedagogy is, it addresses key themes associated with the cultural, social, emotional and intellectual lives of children. It takes some of the basic principles of early years practice such as co-construction of meaning; nurturing approaches; self-regulation of learning and defines what they are with reference to key research and implications for practice. It brings us back to questioning the affordances of ELC environments and how responsive, reciprocal relationships open children’s dispositions for learning (as discussed by Sally Peters in Chapter 2). It is a collection of thoughts and reflections from international researchers in early years education who offer an opportunity to delve deeper into the whys and what’s of practice.

Campbell- Barr, V. (2019) Professional Knowledge and Skills in the Early Years. Knowledge and Skills in the Early Years

This informative book explores what it means to be a professional in the early years. It considers the identity of the educator; what makes us who we are and how we can herald the view that early years matters. It provides a historical backdrop of the profession whilst examining current expectations and direction within policy and practice from an international perspective - the big question being, how do qualifications and professional experiences link with how we, as educators, become disposed to embracing new knowledge, skills and attitudes within our field?

It could be said that if we are to address the issues around quality, we must first look at the knowledge base of our workforce and how this is enacted in everyday practices. This book is useful and easy to access in terms of providing a stimulus for discussion with settings. The chapter summaries and additional reading could be used to facilitate joint understandings of the sorts of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes that can make a difference to how staff and children frame new learning in a ‘shape and size’ that fits with individual settings (chapters 3 and 4). The use of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model as a visual tool to illustrate the different types of knowledge related to professional practice, provides a platform for connecting professional experience and knowledge (chapter 7). I can see the way that this might be used as a model to generate initial discussions around the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are shaping existing practice.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Tracy Cooper, Early Years Development Manager at The Scottish Book Trust discusses The Button Book by Sally Nicholls and Bethan Woollvin, published by Anderson Press. Tracy recommends this book for children aged two years and up.

The Button Book is filled with endearing characters, silliness, and lots of excitement. As the animals stumble across different coloured buttons, they can’t help but wonder what each one does — and there is only one way to find out. The book is very interactive and engaging. It won’t suit a quiet and calm story time, but it is a great story to share with an energetic group. It would be a brilliant story to share outside so children have space to move around. It’s impossible not to join in with the clapping, singing, bouncing, and tickling. Some of the buttons repeat at various points in the story, which makes it a great way to see if children can remember the actions. It would be nice to extend this into a recall and retelling activity. Every button’s colour is different, and so stands out against the black and grey illustrations. There’s only one on each page, and each picture cleverly uses themes of the button’s colour in a simple and eye-catching way. The simplicity is enchanting and beautifully complements the active text. The buttons also include different shapes (circle, hexagon, triangle, and rectangle) so there is scope to talk about these. This book is bright, colourful and attractive. I think it will appeal because of its lively and active story. I like it because it encourages children to join in with the actions. It’s a great choice for active young learners.
Our Magic Tree Small World Table is designed to enhance small world play. Provide a 3D landscape for creating enchanted worlds, building magical fairy cottages and creature homes.

Use our top tips:

1. Provide children with natural materials and loose parts to add to their small world. This will allow them to extend their imaginations as they create new purposes for the open-ended materials and bring them to life.

2. Theme your small world provocations around a familiar storybook. Some children need a spark to ignite their imaginations. A story allows children to ease into their play as they re-create scenarios and play out well-known characters.

3. Add writing resources for children to self-access. Children might like to write tiny messages for their fairies or signs for their miniature towns. This will provide natural and spontaneous opportunities for extending literacy.

Explore more content and ideas online at

tts-group.co.uk

Don’t forget your brand new 5% discount code!* Quote code EYSCOT20 at checkout

*Terms and conditions: 1. This offer is valid until 31.12.2020 and applies to full priced items only. 2. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers and is subject to availability. 3. Excludes Apple products. 4. This offer can be used multiple times per customer. 5. Offer code must be quoted at online checkout or over the phone. 6. TTS Group Limited reserve the right to change these terms and conditions on reasonable notice. 7. Offer is only open to customers that are Early Years Scotland members based in the UK (inc. Channel Islands and Isle of Man). 8. Discounts are applied to the ex-VAT sub-total amount.