



Enriching Children's Lives

Scottish Pre-school Play Association
Manifesto for the Early Years



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A Manifesto for the Early Years

The Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA), in partnership with other agencies, is at the heart of developments and services to enrich children's lives in the early years in Scotland.

We support positive early years experiences for every child through community based pre-school settings and we encourage investment in early years education and childcare services, because it is critical for children and families and Scotland's development as a vibrant successful society.

Enabling parental choice is at the core of our decisions. We support parents, playgroups, parent and toddler groups, all day care centres, out of school clubs, pre-school centres and crèches and believe community based childcare can play a positive role in building stronger communities. With the right information, Scotland's parents should be able to make the best choice of early years childcare for their child and family, without financial disadvantage.

SPPA supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and calls upon elected representatives to promote and embed the rights of the child without discrimination, as defined in the Convention.

Three key messages for all political parties and Scottish Parliamentary candidates

- 1. The early years are a period of formative learning and development which define our society in the long term.**
 - We want our children to have the best start in life so that they are ready to succeed, live longer and healthier lives.
 - We want to improve results significantly and see Scotland feature high on the UNICEF chart on children's well being.
- 2. Parents and the wider family have the greatest influence on children.**
 - We believe parents should be able to choose early years and childcare services with the child's welfare driving the decision rather than economics.
- 3. Collaborative and partnership working helps to develop holistic approaches to 'getting it right for every child'.**
 - We encourage a culture of collaboration and support across the early years sector and increased emphasis on the value of voluntary sector community based services which offer flexible, engaging, innovative and holistic approaches.



The early years are a period of formative learning and development and can have a significant influence on the rest of a child's life.

Providing early interventions and services that help children off to the best start prevents later, often more costly, interventions.

SPPA calls upon elected representatives to:

- Invest in the right place. It has been demonstrated that the highest rate of return to investment in human capital is in the early years.
- Ensure frameworks and standards are in place for early years education and childcare which have children's well being, safety, learning and development at the core.
- Provide early years and childcare services that offer the care and education children need to get them off to the best start in life.
- Increase opportunities for all children to play, through developing new facilities and maximising the use of existing ones.
- Recognise and value the crucial role parents and carers play in their child's learning and development and engage them as partners in service development.



Parents and carers and the wider family have the greatest influence on children, particularly in the early years.

It is crucial to develop partnerships with them in ways which help them to provide nurturing and stimulating family environments that give children the best start in life.

SPPA calls upon elected representatives to:

- Increase support to services that focus on pre-birth to 3.
- Increase support to parent and carers to improve parenting skills to secure better outcomes for their families.
- Ensure the provision of universal high quality, affordable and flexible services that are responsive to the needs of individual children and offer support for disadvantaged and vulnerable families.
- Focus support on service developments that engage and empower families and strengthen communities.



SPPA believes collaborative working and partnership is the way forward to deliver the transformational change the Early Years Framework promises for Scotland's youngest children.

SPPA calls upon elected representatives to:

- Work with the voluntary early years sector as a key strategic and delivery partner.
- Support creative and innovative initiatives that encourage the integration and sharing of services and a more cost effective use of scarce resources between local and national childcare agencies.
- Allocate resources to support the development of appropriate approaches which enable children and their parents/carers to be active participants in the services they use.
- Assess the impact of funding cuts on voluntary sector community based early years and childcare services.
- Provide funding support to enable voluntary sector providers to develop and retain their staff and to be part of achieving the aspiration for a highly skilled, qualified workforce.
- Support community based pre-school groups to manage transitions to new models of governance and staffing structures.
- Champion the right to equality in the commissioning and procurement process to ensure the voluntary sector has the capacity and increased opportunity for service delivery.



Who we are and what we do

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

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