

birth^{to} three:

supporting our youngest children

a Guide for Parents



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE





Birth to three: supporting our youngest children – A National Guideline

In January 2005, the Scottish Executive, in association with Learning and Teaching Scotland, published *Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*. This leaflet for parents explains the purpose of this document.

- ***Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*** provides advice and guidance for all those whose work involves caring for babies and very young children. It explains that babies and young children need to feel loved, secure, happy and cared for in safe and healthy environments and it recognises that the care and wellbeing of children should be the concern of everyone.

- ***Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*** recognises that children's earliest experiences usually take place within the family and that parents have a deep and unique understanding of their own child, which can be shared when the child is cared for by others. Many children spend time being cared for outside the home, for example by a childminder, or in a nursery or family centre. Many children attend a playgroup or a parent and toddler group. Many children also experience the involvement of health visitors, doctors or social workers in their lives.
- ***Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*** takes into account the many different situations that young children may be in. It emphasises the need for having guidance that sets out key ideas about how the important adults in children's lives can best care for them. It is not a handbook and does not give lists of ideas. Instead, it illustrates examples of how children can be cared for and encourages the adults who work with children to think about the ways in which they work – not only with children but also with parents.

Birth to three: supporting our youngest children

describes how babies and young children can best be cared for as they begin to learn about themselves and the world around them. It shows how this is most successful when adults are aware of the important role of three key features of effective practice. These three key features are very closely linked:

- Relationships
- Responsive Care
- Respect.

Relationships

Relationships are important. They provide the starting point for young children's development and learning. Relationships are built as we get to know, trust and understand one another. For example, good relationships begin between parents and other carers when parents' knowledge, skill and experience are valued and where everyone shares what they know. This could be sharing how babies like to be held when they have their bottles, or about a child's favourite toy, song or game.



Responsive Care

Responsive Care means knowing, accepting and respecting each child as an individual, for example, by listening with interest and affection when a child is telling you about something that is important to them, or by talking, singing and smiling at a baby whilst changing its nappy.

Respect

Each child is an individual person who has the right to be treated with real respect at all times, for example, by valuing children's friendships, by making sure that we spend time with each child so that they know they are important and by helping children to understand ways to behave.



More information about *Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*

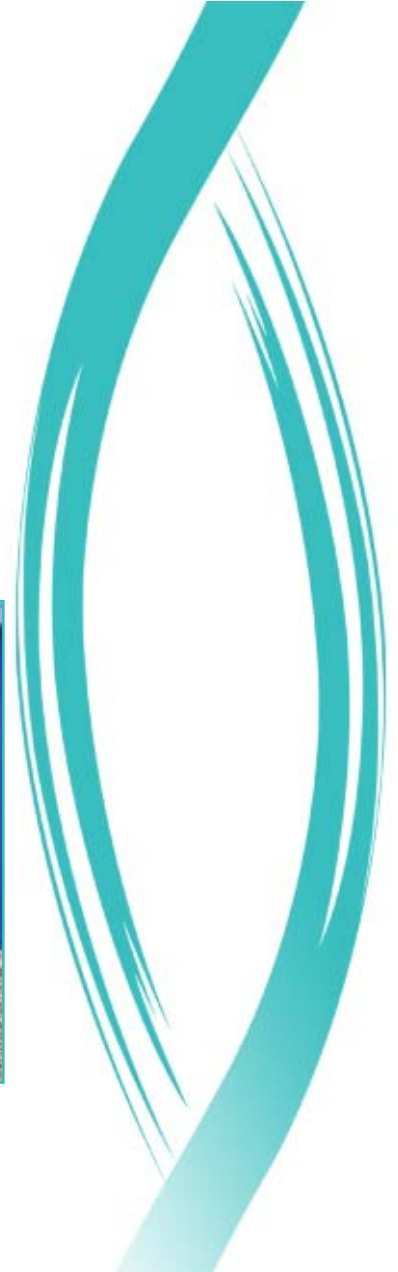
If you have any questions about what you have read in this leaflet, or about any aspect of your child's wellbeing, you should talk to staff members who care for your child. They will be able to show you a copy of the national guidance

Birth to three: supporting our youngest children. Ask them to share with you how they use this document and to explain how it helps them support your child.



It is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that children thrive. It is the responsibility of everybody that children grow up as healthy and as happy as possible.

Birth to three: supporting our youngest children,
Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005



This leaflet is also available in Gaelic, Chinese, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and Bengali. Braille and audio versions can also be ordered. Further copies of this leaflet and copies of the national guidance *Birth to three: supporting our youngest children* can be obtained from Learning and Teaching Scotland, Customer Services: 08700 100 297 and downloaded from the Learning and Teaching Scotland Early Years Online website, www.LTScotland.org.uk/earlyyears



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