

Early Years' Matters

Autumn/Winter 2002

3

THE ROOTS OF LEARNING

Ian Barr argues that safeguarding children's best interests can only be achieved through a coherent national strategy on care and education.

Do we need national advice on the care and education of children under 3?

In a sense, the question is rhetorical. Events have created the need. The profound social changes in favour of greater economic freedom have led to an erosion of the value attached to the 'child's world'. Given this, and the excessive emphases on accelerated child attainment, the need for national advice is urgent.

Safeguarding children's best interests is the most powerful reason for giving guidance, and that advice must be based on quality. But what is 'quality' of experience for a child under 3, and for their parents and teachers?

The real need is for a coherent view of care and education provision that in the first instance focuses on the wellbeing and learning of children and then is extended to the issues that animate the wider educational enterprise for young people at least to the age of 16.

Care for infants and young children should be conceived as part of a broader plan to help parents take responsibility and pleasure in their role as carers of their children. Such a strategic approach would enrich the social and intellectual development of children, with beneficial consequences throughout their lives, and the lives of those close to them.

The risks of issuing guidance that is either too specific or in danger of being misunderstood as intrusive are clear. Nevertheless, authoritative advice is needed on the development of children aged 0–3.

What might be the nature and content of such advice?

Can national advice be as meaningful to single parents in difficult circumstances as it is to care or education professionals in private nursery settings? Certainly it has to be founded on the importance of valuing children and childhood. It needs to highlight the importance of adults in the home as the first educators, but also having a continuing role in the child's development and education. It should describe the nature of the environment for learning and the importance of seeing the child as part of a family and a community. Emphasis needs to be placed on emotional development, the importance of wellbeing as well as cognitive development, and the validation of the child's self-directed voyages of discovery.

A happy child is naturally endowed with powerful motives to communicate and learn, and there is an increasing recognition of the importance of collaborative learning and sympathetic communication between child and carer. Even at the earliest stages, babies are active and communicative participants in the emotions and experiences of their own learning, and in relationships with people who share in those emotions and experiences. Of course the learning is not one-way. By engagement in this process, carers are transformed into effective emotional communicators. We need to create quality learning environments, experiences and relationships, whether at home or not, whether with parents or not. Such environments nurture healthy emotional, cognitive and social development.

Any advice on the development of children aged 0–3 has to be acceptable to all interests, not only education services. And it might well include very valuable inferences for how things should proceed for the education and



Picture by Kirsty Thomson
Jessie Porter Nursery School

socio-emotional support of older children. At this earliest stage the priority must be to ensure that learners come to more formal learning contexts 'proofed' against the worst, most confining, aspects of formal education.

Parents and professionals face a world of endless advice. The chance to draw back and consider the bigger picture is all too rare in a busy life. For that reason, any advice must be straightforward, acceptable as common sense, easily internalised and practical enough to put to use. And the advice needs to be in a form that makes sense to very young parents, older and more experienced adults, as well as a variety of cultural perspectives. It must attend to the principles and values that underpin quality provision: the importance of ensuring that children's voices and rights are heard and respected, and responded to with interest and affection.

It will be no small challenge to provide something that is non-prescriptive but has something useful to say that doesn't become prosaic or even banal. However, if a coherent care and education strategy for Scotland is to be realised, the advice is necessary. With children aged 0–3 we are involved with the roots of learning in its widest and most fundamental sense, developing the whole person or more accurately developing the very active beginnings of humanity.

There could not be a more valuable enterprise.

Ian Barr
Educational Consultant

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



The Best Start in Life

At the launch of the Health Promoting Nursery School, Whitehill Parent and Child Centre, on Monday 16 September, the Minister for Education and Young People, Cathy Jamieson, gave the following speech to celebrate the local initiative and outline the importance of the project.

Introduction

I would like to highlight three main aspects of the project that I have found particularly pleasing because they demonstrate some of the Scottish Executive's major priorities:

- the need to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people
- the need for different agencies to cooperate with one another, and with parents and carers, to ensure that children receive the best possible start in life
- the importance of a dedicated and skilled workforce.

Finally, I would also like to mention briefly the additional funding for early years services that was announced recently, which will bring benefits to local communities throughout Scotland.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle

We know that the health and wellbeing of children and young people is a factor in their ability to achieve and their confidence to learn. An environment that supports and encourages healthy lifestyles is therefore essential, and is one of the building blocks towards future success. The Executive is committed to encouraging all schools to become health promoting schools and, at pre-school level, our Curriculum Framework stresses the importance of providing opportunities for physical activity.

We know that more can be done in this area, however.

The recent report on Standards and Quality in Pre-school Education, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, made it clear that better programmes and facilities are needed in all sectors of pre-school provision to support children's physical development and movement. I am therefore delighted to see the emphasis that Whitehill nursery places on health. And I am particularly pleased to see that there is such an emphasis on *promoting* healthy lifestyle choices in an enjoyable way, as well as educating people to avoid unhealthy options.

The need for integrated working

The second thing that has impressed me about this health promotion project is the extent to which different organisations have cooperated in order to meet their common aim of giving children the best possible start in life. We know that we can only improve our children's opportunities in life if people work together. I am delighted to see that NHS Lanarkshire, the local social inclusion partnership, and South Lanarkshire's early years, education and social work departments have joined together to fund this project. This level of cooperation between health workers, social workers and childcare and education workers is essential if we are to meet our aim of providing support to children when they need it, and in the way that they need it.

I was also particularly pleased to see that this centre is committed to working with parents. Because, when it is appropriate, we must be able to offer support for parents and carers, if we are to provide effective support for children. I have spoken to some of the parents who are currently going through the STEPS programme offered by the nursery. It is clear that the assistance that parents are gaining from the programme will benefit them and their children in future years.

A dedicated and skilled workforce

It is a real privilege to visit the staff who work in early years centres. On a day-to-day basis, their dedication and professionalism helps to improve the lives of children and families throughout Scotland. It is obvious, even from my very brief visit to Whitehill, that the team of staff, headed by Karen Brown, provides a fantastic service, which is appreciated by all of the children and parents.

Boost for early years support

I have already stressed the importance of integrated services, and high-quality staff, in meeting the needs of children throughout Scotland. Both of these are major priorities for the Executive, and Whitehill is an excellent example of the kind of high-quality, integrated approach we want to encourage for early years services, to meet the needs of children throughout Scotland. That is why I welcome the announcement by Andy Kerr, the Minister for Finance, of an additional £31 million for the Sure Start Scotland programme, and an additional £23.9 million for the Childcare Strategy, by 2006. Altogether that represents almost £55 million extra each year in the broad area of early years services for children.

We recognise the need to build up to an expansion of this magnitude. So we will be increasing resources in this area by £6.6 million next year and £29 million in 2004–5.

We also recognise that what really matters is not how much money goes in, but what that money delivers. That is why we have already put in place measures to maintain and enhance early years services, for example, by creating the new Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care to ensure consistency of standards across the country; and by our continuing drive towards better integrated services.

Combined with the additional funding that we announced in March 2002 for the training of childcare workers, and the provision of a pre-school place for every 3- and 4-year-old whose parents want it, this increased funding for Sure Start and the Childcare Strategy will help us to improve further the quality of early years services throughout Scotland. By doing this, we will help to ensure that parents have greater access to employment and training opportunities, and that every child gets the best possible start in life.

Conclusion

This centre is an excellent example of how high-quality early years provision is making a real difference to communities in Scotland. It is founded upon the idea of cooperation between different agencies, in order to provide the best possible service for children and families. It has a dedicated and skilled workforce that is committed to working with children, and its emphasis on health promotion should ensure that the children are able to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Starting out healthy

Whitehill Parent and Child Centre, in one of South Lanarkshire's Social Inclusion Partnership areas, is one of the first to launch a Health Promoting Nursery.

The new project builds on existing good practice of curricular experiences on health, exercise, emotional, personal and social issues, already offered to nursery children. As well as tackling basic health issues such as exercise, healthy eating and dental care, the nursery project will also look at issues of self-esteem, parental confidence and limiting life circumstances.

To make an impact on children's wellbeing, it is important also to target the people who care for the children – parents and staff – building on existing partnership links between nursery and home. A key feature of the project involves educating parents and staff about healthy eating and diet, and supporting parents to enable them to offer healthier options at home. The nursery staff has also devised its own working policy on healthy eating.

The Health Promoting Nursery has been set strict targets over the next three years and, if the project is a success and improves the health of nursery staff, children and their parents, then it will be considered for mainstream adoption throughout Scotland.

‘An environment that supports and encourages healthy lifestyles is one of the building blocks towards future success.’



Picture by Emily Morris, aged 3 yrs 7 mths
Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class

Working towards a healthier Scotland

The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit provides support and guidance to schools, helping them to achieve the aims of health education and promotion.

The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit was established on 1 May 2002, initially for a period of three years, in response to the commitment given in the Scottish Executive's White Paper *Towards a Healthier Scotland* to establish a specialist unit to develop health education and health promotion in schools. The Unit operates as a partnership between Learning and Teaching Scotland, that hosts the unit in Dundee, the Health Education Board for Scotland and CoSLA, with the close involvement of the Scottish Executive Education and Health departments, that also fund the Unit.

The work of the Unit is supported and informed by the Partners' Group, which meets at regular intervals, and a steering group, which represents a wide cross-section of education and health promoting interests. The Unit is also informally supported by a group of 'critical friends', including children and young people.

The remit of the Unit is to take a key national leadership role in championing, facilitating and supporting the implementation of the health promoting school concept throughout Scotland. By contributing to personal, community and national wellbeing, the work of the Unit should play its part in making Scotland a place where people make healthy, wise and discerning choices about their own lives and environments and their roles in an inclusive society.

The Unit works in collaboration with a wide variety of interests in education and in health promotion, to champion and promote the development of the concept of the health promoting school among school staff, parents, local authorities and the wider community. It will offer support and guidance to local authorities as they work with their schools to make a significant and lasting impact on the healthy development of young people.

The Unit operates by the principles it advocates for others, in other words it is:

- participative and collaborative
- aware of the importance of relationships
- inclusive
- focused on making connections
- sustainable
- self-evaluating, future-orientated and open to change.

All schools aim to help children and young people do well. The Health Promoting Schools Unit has an important role to play in helping schools in this task.

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ECO GREEN FLAG INSPIRATION

Orbiston Nursery School is a North Lanarkshire Local Authority Nursery situated in the Orbiston area of Bellshill. It is also part of a designated Social Inclusion Partnership area.

In 1999, through the Nursery's Development Plan, we recognised that we needed to develop opportunities for our children in both outdoor energetic play and in programmes for Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

As a result, two of our members of staff, Rose Quigley and Marie McLaughlin, attended an In-Service course organized by the authority and delivered by Clare Warden. Rose and Marie returned to the nursery inspired and enthusiastic and in turn, inspired the rest of the staff and parents to develop the nursery's outdoor area. Plants, planters, bulbs, trellises and bikes were bought. Parents painted our walls, bought wellies, brollies and macs for all the children. They built a tyre climbing area and a daily programme was established for outdoor experiences and play – regardless of the weather!

Our Home Link worker, Liz McAllan, applied to Awards for All and our parents designed and completed our beautiful 'Four Seasons' mosaic wall. A further grant enabled us to cultivate a completely 'dead' area into our lovely picnic garden.

We thought we were doing really well! Then we discovered the ECO Green Flag Scheme and a whole new dimension was opened up to us. Our rather modest outdoor play project has now been completely transformed. We now not only have wonderful opportunities for the children outside, we have also made strong links with our much broader healthier lifestyles practice and awareness, which involves children, parents and staff.

We found participating in the ECO Award to be challenging but also very rewarding. Our ECO Committee has led us forward and helped us to develop our Healthy Eating Policy, an anti-litter project, recycling, energy saving and exercise programmes for children and parents, anti-bullying procedures and much, much more.

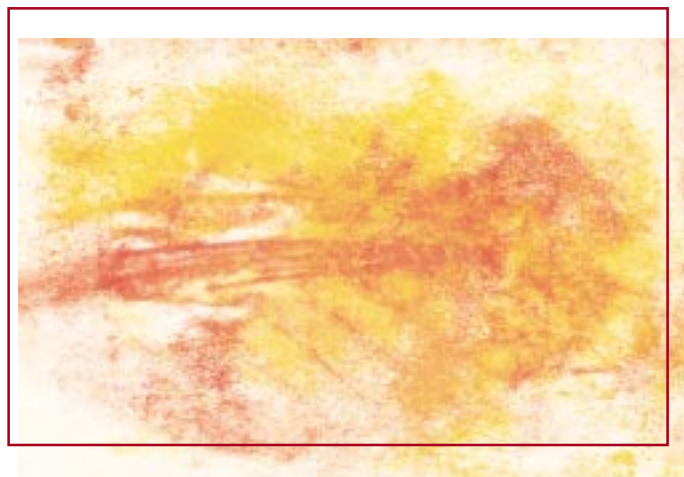
We are currently piloting a Health Pack for parents and staff to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles, involving many of our parents taking part in a weekly 'Keep-fit' class, followed by a basic first aid course. The Nutrition and Oral Health Development Worker, Ann-Marie Crielly, is supporting us with both resources and display materials and we are busy making plans for a number of future events, such as a walk to work week, low fat and low salt days, and exercise days. In addition, North Lanarkshire Council is also about to provide filters and water bottles for each child in order to encourage them to drink more water regularly.

The children at Orbiston Nursery have been very much involved and consulted throughout. They have been consulted about their preferences and have quickly adapted to using our paper recycling bins, setting a very good example to their families.

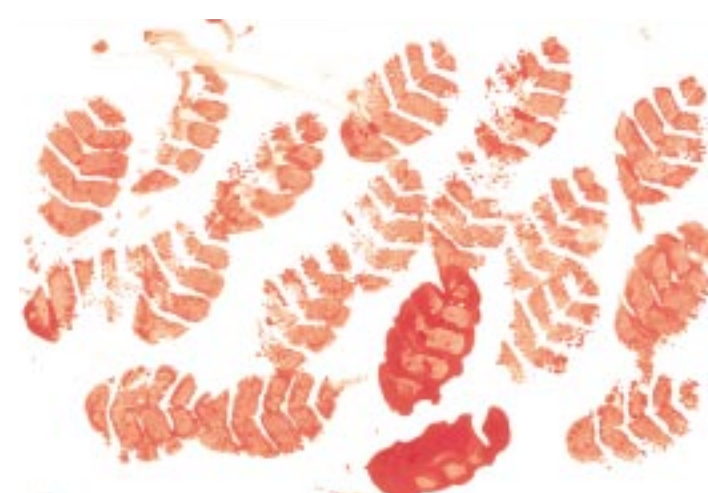
Participating in the ECO Award has without a doubt developed our practice and all of us, parents, children and staff have been involved in promoting healthier, happier and more interesting lifestyles.

Lydia Hook
Headteacher, Orbiston Nursery School

To find out more about the ECO Green Flag Award scheme, contact www.eco-schools.org.uk



Picture by Darren Brown, aged 4 yrs 7 mths, Fintry Nursery School



Picture by Cindy Cosgrove, aged 3 yrs 7 mths, Jessie Porter Nursery School

Assessment is for Learning

Donna Murray, a Development Officer for Assessment 3–14, explains the ideas behind the programme, and invites views from interested readers.

In my work as a nursery teacher at Bankhead Nursery Class in South Lanarkshire, I was privileged to work with a fantastic team. Teamwork is very important to me, so I was pleased to find that it is also rated highly at Learning and Teaching Scotland where I am now on secondment as a Development Officer for the 'Assessment is for Learning' Programme.

This is a national programme for 3–14 year-olds and one of its main aims is to develop a unified system of recording and reporting that will bring together the current Personal Learning Plan, Progress File, Transition Records and Individual Education Programmes. The inclusion of early years in this programme recognises the impact that increased nursery provision and early intervention strategies have had on the implementation of the 5–14 curriculum. The programme involves ten individual but related projects, and early years establishments nominated by their local authority will play a key role.

As the Development Officer for Project 9: 'Reporting to Parents and other Teachers', I will be investigating how reporting can be linked to the Personal Learning Plan framework. Although the Personal Learning Plan may be unfamiliar to some early years staff, many will recognise similarities between this and their current practice. Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) are already in place for children with special needs, and most establishments record children's achievements and progress in learning during their time at nursery. This information is often transferred to an end-of-year report for parents and receiving schools. The introduction of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) for all children will build on this existing practice, and contributions from parents and the children themselves will also acknowledge the learning and achievements that take place outside the nursery and school setting.

Clearly this will involve partnership with parents. Many early years practitioners will already be aware of the research evidence available on the impact of effective partnership with the parents of pre-school children. However, if we are to achieve true partnership we must remember that education does not only take place in the nursery or school and that parents have a role to play as co-educators of their child.

The Assessment is for Learning programme is now into its second phase and consultation with staff from all sectors will continue to play a key role in its success. This process has already begun with Project 9 and, during a recent meeting with early years and primary headteachers from Dundee City Council, the following issues were raised.

- When will parents have an input to the report?
- How do parents' expectations of their child's achievements compare with those of the nursery/school staff?
- How much work will be involved in writing reports?
- Will there be guidance for parents on the reporting format?
- What will the format look like and will it be parent friendly?
- Will the same format be used across all sectors?
- Will this project help to improve liaison between sectors and build trust in the professional judgement of others?

I am continuing to seek the views of all those involved in this project and would also very much like to hear from others in the early years sector.

To let us know your thoughts on this project, post a discussion point on the public forum by accessing the Learning and Teaching Scotland assessment website www.LTScotland.com/assess, or contact me directly.

Donna Murray

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Image taken by digital camera, Gavin Miln, aged 4 yrs 4 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



Picture by Nicola Weaver-Sharpe, aged 4 yrs 6 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



CHILDHOOD CHOICES

What is childhood? How can it be safeguarded? What are the possibilities? These are some of the important issues to be discussed at a conference in Glasgow in September 2003.

The European Early Childhood Education Research Association's (EECERA) Scottish Committee and Learning and Teaching Scotland have collaborated to include a day for early years practitioners at the EECERA international research conference to be held in Glasgow in September 2003. The conference theme is **Possible Childhoods: Relationships and Choices**.

Early childhood is full of potential: the choices we make for and with children – within the family, in early years settings, and at local, national and international levels – are critical for children's experience of childhood. Their childhoods are determined by the models and frameworks that families, communities, politics and society espouse. Investing in childhood is recognised as beneficial for individuals and for society, but we must be careful to do this in ways that open up childhood experience rather than constrain it and limit children's scope. Given that the nature of our investment is so important, every community, including the early childhood research community, needs to ask itself some critical questions. This forthcoming conference is designed to address such questions.

Sub-themes include Childhood, Children's Voices, Children and Families, Children in Society, Aims for Childhood, Rights & Responsibilities, Integration & Diversity, Supporting Choices for Childhood, Relationships, Learning Dispositions, Professional Education and Investment in Childhood.

Analysing these aspects of childhood means investigating, describing and evaluating children's experiences, their freedom and capacity to learn, and the relationships and environments that bring out the best in them.

EECERA firmly believes that successful childhood experience needs to be informed by research, policy and practice. The Learning and Teaching Scotland–EECERA Practitioner Day at this conference presents a valuable opportunity to share research and practice and to open up discussion between the two organisations.



EECERA 2003: Outline of the Conference Programme

Pre-conference programme

Saturday 30 August–Tuesday 2 September: Scottish Tour
Tuesday 2 September 2003: 10.00–15.00 Early education visits

Day 1: Wednesday 3 September 2003

10.00–12.00 Meeting of the EECERA Board
10.00–13.00 Cultural Tour
13.00–15.00 Meeting of the Editorial Board of the *EECE Research Journal*
16.00–17.00 Meeting of the EECERA Members
17.00–19.00 Registration at the John Anderson Campus
19.00 Reception with the Principal of Strathclyde University at the Barony

Day 2: Thursday 4 September 2003

08.30–09.30 Registration
09.30–09.50 Opening address: Scotland's First Minister
09.50–10.10 Early Years: Minister for Education
TBA Opening Keynote Session: Emeritus Professor Sally Brown, Stirling University, *Celebrating childhood*
Symposia Set 1
12.45–14.00 Lunch in the Lord Todd Building
14.00–15.30 Symposia Set 2
TBA Professor Ingrid Pramling-Samuelsson, Gothenburg University, *Children's voices: How do children 'tell' their childhood?*
17.00 Special interest groups/Local practitioner presentations
TBA Evening Guest Lecture: Professor Howard Gardner, Harvard University, *Learning dispositions*
TBA Video Conference chaired by Lesley Riddoch, BBC Scotland

Day 3: Friday 5 September 2003

09.00–10.30 Symposia Set 3
TBA Professor Tullia Musatti, National Centre of Research, Rome, *Parents and young children: New answers to new demands*
12.15–14.00 Lunch in the Lord Todd Building
14.00–15.30 Symposia: Set 4
16.00–17.30 Symposia: Set 5
19.30 Conference Reception, Buffet and Ceilidh: Glasgow City Chambers

Day 4: Saturday 6 September 2003

On the final day of the conference we will be joined by practitioner delegates from Scottish early years settings. Seating for the morning's lectures will be offered in the main lecture theatre with overflow in a smaller lecture theatre with a video link. This will be done on a first-come, first-served basis.

TBA Professor Iram Siraj-Blatchford, University of London, Institute of Education, *Children accessing learning in diverse socio-cultural contexts*
10.30–1.00 Coffee
11.00–12.00 Professor Alan Prout, Stirling University, *Theorizing Childhood*
12.00–12.30 CLOSING CEREMONY in the John Anderson Lecture Theatre
12.30–14.00 Lunch at the Lord Todd Building
14.30–21.00 Excursions, afternoon tours, exhibitions

Post-conference programme

Saturday 6 September–Tuesday 9 September: Scottish Tour

Keynote conference speech titles

Thursday 4 September: daytime

Celebrating childhood

Emeritus Professor Sally Brown, Stirling University

Children's voices: How do children 'tell' their childhood?

Professor Ingrid Pramling-Samuelsson, Gothenburg University

Thursday 4 September: evening

Learning dispositions

Professor Howard Gardner, Harvard University

Friday 5 September: daytime

Parents and young children: New answers to new demands

Professor Tullia Musatti, National Centre of Research, Rome

Saturday 6 September: morning

Children accessing learning in diverse socio-cultural contexts

Professor Iram Siraj-Blatchford, University of London, Institute of Education

Theorizing childhood

Professor Alan Prout, Stirling University

ICT and Expressive and Aesthetic Development – in practice



Picture by Hannah Gilchrist, aged 3 yrs 10 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



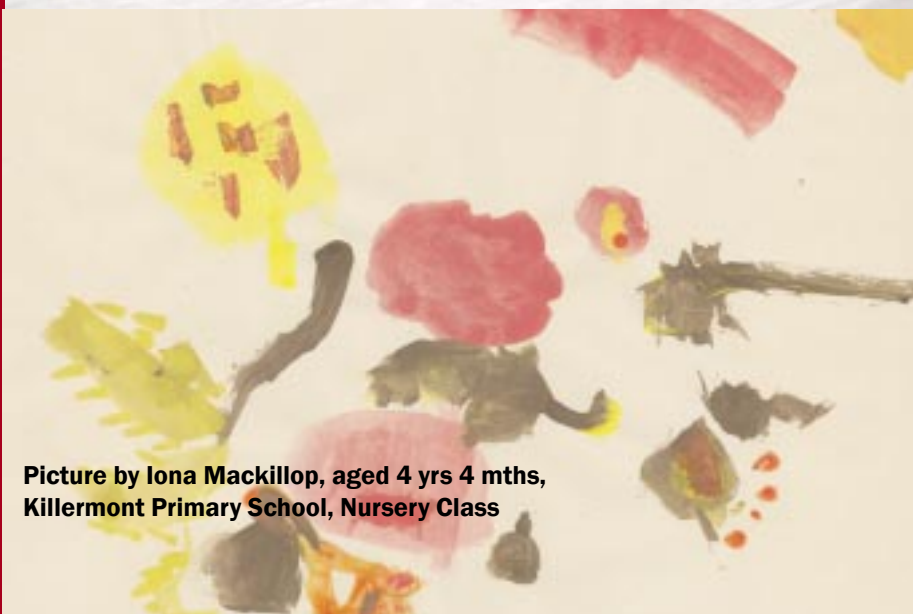
Picture by Karis Gilby, aged 4 yrs 7 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



Picture by Chelsea Roe, aged 4 yrs 8 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



Picture by Erin Corry, aged 3 yrs 9 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class



Picture by Iona Mackillop, aged 4 yrs 4 mths, Killermont Primary School, Nursery Class

Karen Shepherd, Killermont Primary School Nursery Class, describes how children use a digital camera to extend work on the theme of 'Autumn'. The children selected sample of autumn leaves, berries and nuts and used these to create individual arrangements on a table top. They then used a JamC@m digital camera to photograph their arrangements.

The images were downloaded to the computer and the children then selected four to be printed out. They were encouraged to look for clarity and images that would not be too difficult to reproduce, as they were going to draw and paint what they could see in the photographs.

The activity was offered during the free play session and children could choose whether they wanted to draw or paint. They selected their materials from a wide range on offer. A mixture of wax crayons, chinks and pastels were used for drawing. The children used various thickness of brushes to paint, and blended palette and bottle paints to achieve their desired shades.

Staff worked with individual children, encouraging them to observe the photographs closely, paying particular attention to colours, shapes and sizes.

A great deal of verbal interaction took place during the painting or drawing, as each child was helped to focus on individual sections in detail. Children were also encouraged to pay attention to the position of each leaf in relation to the rest of the page. Most found it easier to start with items at the top edge of the page and work towards the bottom, although some focused directly on the largest or most striking feature and then worked around this.

Painting in particular was time consuming, but the children appeared to enjoy the experience and were extremely proud of their artwork. Others gathered to watch and as soon as one child left the paint table, another hastily put on the apron and took up a paintbrush.

For those children who are less confident artists, the digital camera offers an alternative medium through which they can express themselves and create pictures they find aesthetically pleasing. It was interesting to note that more boys than girls chose to use the camera. The reverse was true regarding the artwork. Several children experimented with both media and all appeared to derive pleasure from the experience.

Creating and representing the compositions has proved a valuable learning experience for all involved. Pupils, parents and staff have all been impressed by the children's careful observations and their ability to express these through different media. We aim to extend the experience to as many children as possible, by focusing on subjects that will appeal to their individual interests.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

Many of you were impressed with the artwork in the previous issues of *Early Years Matters*, so we asked Colette Hodgkinson of the Early Learning Unit to describe how she uses Monet's paintings to inspire nursery children to create beautiful artwork.

I have always admired Claude Monet's paintings because they generate a hypnotic energy and a kaleidoscope of colour. Visiting Monet's house and gardens in Giverny in France, I was enchanted by the magical garden which inspired his vibrant use of colours. I couldn't wait to get back and start appreciating his paintings with the nursery children. The colours are so vivid that they delight young children and are easy for them to copy.

I begin my topic by telling the children about the artist and his life. To do this, I read them *Linnea in Monet's Garden* by Christina Bjork and Lena Anderson. It is a story about a little girl who loves flowers and goes to visit Monet's garden. This delightful story brings the artist to life for the children.

I go to on to look at Monet's paintings with the children – discussing the colours and the artistic techniques he uses. We do this by looking at the paintings reproduced in *Monet's Water Lilies*, a beautiful book by Vivian Russell.

I then ask each child to choose their favourite Monet picture and I talk to them on a one-to-one basis about why they have chosen that particular picture. Then I suggest that they try to copy the picture. I get each child to do a 'colour-wash' across the paper, using a tiny amount of poster paint mixed into a beaker of water. While the wash is still damp, I encourage the child to copy their favourite Monet picture. Pieces of sponge cut into quite small pieces are easy for the children to use and very effective. Block watercolours are best for this – the child rubs the sponge on the block and dabs it on to the paper to create the look of flowers or water. Using sponges on the wet colour-wash produces magical effects and the children enjoy seeing their paintings develop. Some children will spontaneously use finger prints, and I also supply fine brushes. Again on a one-to-one basis, I talk to each child about their painting.

The secret to getting good artwork from nursery children is to make the art 'come alive'.

It is also possible to involve the children in a whole-class project. Once, we copied Monet's painting *The Japanese Bridge* on to a large piece of paper covering the wall at the back of the room, with the children using sponges, and adults holding the children while they stood on tables to reach the high parts.

I always end my Monet project by reading Joan Sweeney's book *Once Upon A Lily Pad (Froggy love in Monet's garden)* to the children. This is a charming story of two frogs that live in Monet's garden, and the children love it.

The secret to getting good artwork from nursery children is to make the art 'come alive'. Van Gogh's pictures are equally good to use, especially his painting *Starry Night*. I also use modern-day artists, again always working in small groups, with children copying the work on a one-to-one basis. When planned well, this is not as difficult as it sounds, and the results delight both the adult and, more importantly, the child.

Recommended Monet paintings

- *Les Barques Regates à Argenteuil*
- *Nymphéas*
- *Le Jardin de L'artiste à Giverny*
- *Rising Sun*
- *The Bridge in Monet's Garden* (several)

Recommended books

- *Linnea in Monet's Garden*, Christina Bjork and Lena Anderson (Rabe'n & Sjogen, Sweden)
- *Monet's Water Lilies*, Vivian Russell (Frances Lincoln Ltd, London)
- *Once Upon a Lily Pad*, Joan Sweeney (Chronicle Books, California)



Picture by Callum Murphy, aged 4, Early Learning Unit, Hamilton

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome the following new members of staff to Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Karen Shepherd – Early Years Development Officer – ICT in Pre-school

Previously employed in administration, I began teaching in 1996 – the past five years as nursery class teacher at Killermont Primary, Bearsden.

I am delighted to be part of the ICT in the Pre-school team, having witnessed my own pupils' enhanced learning and increased self-esteem when working with ICT. Last year we received an ICT Innovations Award from the NGfL Scotland, to create a computer application to support children starting nursery, in various home languages.

I believe all staff involved with children's learning should have access to training to gain ICT skills and how best to use ICT to aid learning.

Wendy Armstrong – Early years Development Officer – ICT in Pre-school

I have been seconded to LT Scotland from my present job as an educational psychologist in Glasgow. Over a number of years I have had other varied experiences professionally for example as a Home Visiting Teacher, part-time Lecturer, Learning Support Teacher in Early Years, and also working on South Lanarkshire's Early Intervention Project on pre-5 primary transition. As one of the Development Officers working on the ICT in Pre-school Project, I'm looking forward to the challenge of working towards a national strategy to assist developments in this exciting and ever-changing field.

Juliet Hancock – Early Years Development Officer, Emerging Trends

I have taken on this exciting development post for the next 18 months and am looking forward to being involved in a range of interesting areas. Over the coming months I will be working on a Framework for children from birth to 3 years; issues of pedagogy in early years across Scotland and links between the National Priorities for Education in Scotland and early years practice – along with other emerging trends!

My background covers early years and primary teaching, national development work with the voluntary sector in early years, and, within a Further Education context, the development of flexible learning opportunities for adults working with young children. I have enjoyed being involved with Learning and Teaching Scotland on a consultancy basis, dating back to SCCC days and the first draft of the Curriculum Framework for children 3 to 5 and am delighted to be able to take on the Emerging Trends post and become more actively involved. My experience of working with the Early Years team at Learning and Teaching Scotland over the past years has left me with a firm impression of professionalism, the value of partnership working and the importance of making connections between all issues concerned with learning and teaching.

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Progress with Purpose – Additional Support Materials

This pack has been developed to supplement the 'Progress with Purpose' staff development materials, and focuses on the following areas:

- English as an Additional Language
- Special Educational Needs
- Gaelic Medium Education

The pack is designed to help all those working with children in the early stages of their development and learning and will be helpful to all staff working in the early stages of primary, in local authority, partner provider, voluntary and private early years centres and in Gaelic medium settings. The pack consists of a video and a print pack of staff development materials.

The activities presented in this staff development pack help to exemplify learning in its many forms, allow good practice to be shared and encourage staff members to reflect on their own practice in a meaningful and productive way. All the activities in the pack are designed to provoke reflection and discussion on the continuity of children's learning with a focus on issues of particular importance to English as an Additional Language, Special Educational Needs and Gaelic Medium Education.

This pack of supplementary staff development materials is the result of practitioners from many different settings working together and their collaboration, enthusiasm and comments have helped to create a resource that will encourage effective planning of possible directions for children's interests, development and learning.

To order your copy of 'Progress with Purpose: Additional Support Materials', contact customer services at Learning and Teaching Scotland on 0800 100297.

We need your Feedback!

This is the third edition of Early Years' Matters and we would really welcome your views. Are there areas which you are particularly interested in? Are there any articles which you would like to see feature in our next edition? Do you have something innovative and exciting which you could share with us?

Please send your views and comments in the space provided and send to: **Liz Paterson**, Principal Curriculum Officer, Early Years, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow G12 9JN. E-mail: l.paterson@LTScotland.com

Name: _____

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