

POSITIVE STARTS EAST AYRSHIRE'S RESPONSE TO THE EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK

Positive Starts is about East Ayrshire's ambitions for children in their early years, within the context of the Governments *Early Years Framework*.

Children in their early years are defined as pre-birth to 8 years old. In East Ayrshire we are focussing on pre-birth to 12 years of age.

"What happens to children in their earliest years says much about our society and is key to outcomes in adult life." (Early Years Framework 2008).

The Early Years Framework is intended to improve the life chances of Scotland's children and tackle inequalities by targeting the early years. It is an ambitious framework and requires all services and agencies, including the voluntary sector to be bold in their ambitions, re-design their services, where appropriate, to better improve services to children and their families. It seeks to take away the bureaucracy and any duplication in services and seeks to build capacity within communities to support children and their families.

The aspiration is to develop longer term solutions that support children and parents.

For many service providers, it will mean a challenge from dealing with the here and now, often through crisis management, to intervening at a much earlier stage in a timely, meaningful and purposeful way, to effect longer term change and improve outcomes in later life.

The Early Years Framework is also set within the context of the Scottish Government's *Equally Well* report, which tackles health inequalities and *Achieving Our Potential* which tackles poverty and income inequalities.

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

The vision for early years is based on a model for transformational change linked to ten elements of change as set out in the framework. These are:

THE TEN ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

- A coherent approach
- Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves
- Breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years
- A focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities
- Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention
- Putting quality at the heart of service delivery
- Services that meet the needs of children and families
- Improving outcomes in children's quality of life through play
- Simplifying and streamlining delivery
- More effective collaborations

Community Planning Partners, led through the East Ayrshire Community Health Partnership Officer Locality Group for Children and Young People have decided to focus their priorities on the undernoted key elements of transformational change:

- *Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves*
- *Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention*
- *Simplifying and streamlining delivery*
- *Collaborative approaches*

How will we take this forward?

The context for moving forward will be *Getting It Right For Every Child*. The

Scottish Government talk of this as the delivery tool for the Early Years Framework. Fundamentally it is about ensuring that agencies increasingly work towards *One Child, One Assessment, One Plan*. Progress in East Ayrshire is already being made in relation to this through the roll out of an Integrated Assessment Framework.

The ethos of *Getting It Right for Every Child* is very closely aligned to the Government's vision for Scotland's children, better known as SHANARRI:

Children should be:

SAFE – protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

HEALTHY – having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable health care, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.

ACHIEVING – being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school and in the community.

NURTURED – Having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting.

ACTIVE – having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community.

RESPECTED – having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them.

RESPONSIBLE – having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.

INCLUDED – having helped to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

We want to ask key questions:

- What do we currently know about services and their effectiveness?
- What do we currently know about the needs of our youngest children and their families and are these matched to the current level and delivery of services?
- Are there things that we can do which will reduce any potential overlap or duplication?
- Are there things that we can do to ensure that we are much more consistent in the messages and the work that we do with individual families and their children?

IF YOU HAVE A CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE TO ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS PLEASE E-MAIL KAY GILMOUR: kay.gilmour@east-ayrshire.gov.uk