

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2005

BIRTH TO THREE : SUPPORTING OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Education Committee of the recently published “Birth to three: supporting our youngest children” document.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Learning and Teaching Scotland were commissioned by the Scottish Executive Education Department to prepare national guidance for all of those practitioners who work with children under three years of age. This is intended to include early years workers, social care, health practitioners and students preparing to work in early years settings.
- 2.2 It is the first national document produced which relates solely to supporting children’s learning and development who are under three years of age.

3. THE DOCUMENT

- 3.1 The document should be used as a foundation for children’s future learning and development. It also reflects the view in “For Scotland’s Children” that care and well being of children is the concern of everyone. The guidance is based on three key features through which effective support in learning opportunities for very young children can be developed namely:
- Relationships
 - Responsive care
 - Respect
- 3.2 It is based on the understanding that environment, health, community and family all influence children’s personal development and shape children’s early experiences. The document shares the same underlying principles as a Curriculum Framework for children 3-5:
- The best interests of children are at the heart of services
 - Relationships are of central importance not just for effective learning but also for healthy development and emotional wellbeing
 - There is a need for all children to be included and have a sense of belonging
 - There is an understanding of the ways in which children learn
 - The fundamental principal of equality of opportunity, recognising that diversity is something which should be valued

4. PROGRESS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 4.1** In 2002 East Ayrshire Early Years Service produced the document “The Right to be Me”. This was the first document to be produced in East Ayrshire solely for practitioners and parents working with children under three.
- 4.2** The document was commissioned in the recognition that much of the development work in early years had previously taken place with children 3 – 5 years of age. “The Right To Be Me” has been recognised in the new national document as a key source for information and staff have been asked to present the content of the document at a number of national conferences. “The Right To Be Me” is based on a series of rights and fits very comfortably with the new national material.
- 4.3** Following the publication of “The Right To Be Me” officers have been developing supporting documentation for staff which records in a very positive way the learning which takes place in very young children which can be passed on in conjunction with parents to pre school provision.
- 4.4** A set of documents are therefore now available in East Ayrshire which records children’s learning experiences from nought through to their transition into primary school.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The new national document and East Ayrshire’s documentation will assist the Authority to achieve the outcomes as set out in the draft national Integrated Strategy for Early Years. It also sits within the umbrella of East Ayrshire’s Integrated Children’s Service Plan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** Members of the Education Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

2/3/05
KG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The Right to Be Me: East Ayrshire Council 2002
2. Birth to three: Supporting our youngest children, Scottish Executive Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

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