



PEN PICTURE: Early Years Scotland

Early Years Scotland is the principal national organisation dedicated to the early years of children's lives, from pre-birth to five years. We are tackling the attainment gap by providing direct support for 4,000 children through our brand of family-focused Early Learning and Childcare.

Our range of *Stay, Play and Learn* services offer a two generational, play-based approach where qualified practitioners encourage and engage with young children and their parents and carers by strengthening and improving confidence, attachments, engagement, connection and nurture, thus improving home-learning environments and attainment. Our qualified early years professional staff offer these very popular services within a variety of local community settings including schools, community and church halls, nurseries, family homes and in prisons.

Our 2 *Stay, Play and Learn* sessions provide eligible two-year olds and their families the opportunity to access a unique model of provision, where instead of dropping their children off at nursery, the parents stay, play and learn too! This model of Early Learning and Childcare supports parents to be fully involved and engaged in their children's learning from the start. It also offers them an option to participate in additional personal learning and development as appropriate.

Our *P1 Stay, Play and Learn* offers parents the opportunity to attend shared play and learning experiences to support their child before, when starting and during Primary 1, delivering informal play-based experiences with children and their parents within the primary school environment. This provides parents with the opportunity to develop an understanding of the importance of play in learning and development and to enjoy quality time with their child in a relaxed, informal and familiar environment. *P1 Stay, Play and Learn* assists in making the transition to primary school an enjoyable, positive and progressive experience for all.

The central aim of the *0-5 Stay, Play and Learn* service is to provide shared play and learning opportunities for small groups of families with young children from birth to five in local community settings. Once a suitable venue has been identified, the one-and-a-half hour sessions run once or twice per week.

Our *Prison Stay, Play and Learn* service is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service in six prisons. It supports young children affected by parental imprisonment. We recognise that the breakdown of family relationships when a parent is in prison can lead to a higher risk of re-offending. Families are provided with opportunities to improve attachments, play and interactions so that relationships are more likely to stay strong, leading to more positive outcomes for the children. In addition, the *Fathers' Programme* involves working with prisoners to increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of play, healthy living, positive behaviour management, communications, early literacy, child development and brain development. Within the *Fathers' Programme*, prisoners also have the opportunity to engage in practical play experiences, building their knowledge and confidence when later playing with their child at the family visit time.