

Investing in children's futures:

The new childhood practice awards



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Qualifications update for all managers in day care of children services

From the 1 December 2011, on re-registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), all managers of a day care of children service will be required to hold or be working towards a level 9 Childhood Practice qualification. This includes managers of nurseries, crèches, play groups and out of school care. The awards currently available that meet this requirement are: the BA Childhood Practice and Postgraduate Diploma in Childhood Practice.

Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram MSP said:

"As Minister for Children and Early Years I have been privileged to be part of the Childhood Practice journey. In 2007 I was present at the launch of the Scottish Benchmark Standard for Childhood Practice and in 2008 at the launch of the first BA Childhood Practice programme at Strathclyde University. With seven universities now delivering the award, 600 students on the programme and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) developing an award for later this year, the progress has been impressive. But I am also not surprised at these achievements, because I know the children's workforce and those associated with it are determined, full of passion and commitment, and have a desire to do the best they can for the children and families they care for.

"The Scottish Government are equally committed and I firmly believe that we can make a real difference to the outcomes of children and their families if we get it right in the early years. Having a highly qualified and high quality workforce will help us achieve that and Childhood Practice will provide the skills, knowledge and leadership to deliver the professional action required. I would like to thank the SSSC and everyone involved in the development of Childhood Practice and I look optimistically towards the workforce to take their new skills and help us make a brighter future for Scotland's children."

The new qualification will make sure that all managers have the same regulatory requirements and there are no differences in the status of their awards. Evidence shows that well led services achieve better outcomes for children partly because the people who are leading have a strong sense of where they want to take the service and the Childhood Practice award is about equipping people working with children with the skills they need to be able to achieve this.

Frances Scott, Workforce Development Manager said:

"We want children to achieve the best possible outcomes and it is essential that the people looking after them in nurseries, playgroups and out of school care have the highest level of skills and knowledge. The Scottish

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Government's decision to include all managers sends out a clear message that everyone who cares for children has an important part to play. I am pleased that Scotland's education providers have risen to the challenge of ensuring that the Childhood Practice award is available across the country."

Recognition of prior learning is one of the ways that learners will be given credit by course providers for any assessed and credit rated awards they have already completed. To find out more about this and the amount of credit you might get or for further information on the awards visit: www.sssc.uk.com/childhoodpractice

Launched in 2008, the innovative **Childhood Practice award** is one of the first work-based degrees in Scotland where entry is based on vocational qualifications (SVQs) and the experience people have gained in their career to date.

Log on to the SSSC website: www.sssc.uk.com for more information about the Childhood Practice awards and to view frequently asked questions.

Childhood Practice award – Delivering brighter futures

A Parliamentary reception sponsored by Christina McKelvie MSP and attended by over 50 guests was recently held to launch the SSSC film: **Childhood Practice – growing, learning, changing.**

The film is designed to help employers, workers and parents/carers understand the difference that skilled and qualified staff can make. You can hear from people working in a range of child care and family support settings how the new qualification has had a direct impact and find out how it has helped to deliver better services, improve outcomes for children and why it's important to have good leaders in the sector. You can see the film on the SSSC's You Tube site SSSC TV at: www.sssc.uk.com

At the reception Christina McKelvie MSP, said: "I pay tribute to the Scottish Social Services Council for its work developing the award, putting Scotland right at the forefront of the development of integrated qualifications for early years and child care practitioners.

"It's a move that recognises the importance of pitching for the very best outcomes for children while offering practitioners the stamp of recognition of their degree-level professionalism, signposting an important shift in children's services; working with children is a profession and that the importance of high quality care and education in the early years is an important concern of that profession."



SSSC Chief Executive welcomes the award

"In Scotland, there is agreement across the social policy agenda that investment in the early years and in early intervention pays dividends in the longer term.

But that doesn't just mean financial investment, it means commitment to children and their families from conception – recognising that the early years of a child's life are crucial to their outcomes as adults. If we get it right in the early years, we reduce the likelihood of young people hitting crisis points in adolescence

or even as adults. That can only be done through partnership amongst professionals and between professionals and families and requires a high level of skill in everyone working with children and families.

"Historically, people working in the early years and child care sector have been under-valued. Yet they are eager to learn and to demonstrate their competence in a way which is tangible to the parents who trust them with the care of their children

and to their employers to improve their career prospects and earning potential. The Childhood Practice award is ground-breaking in the UK and is being looked to across Europe as a model from which other countries can learn. Its development was innovative, inclusive and collaborative and that is what makes it such a great qualification.

"The award recognises that early years and child care workers have a wealth of experience and knowledge which deserves to be accredited. It is not the traditional chalk and talk approach to learning, but very much collaboration between the student, the workplace and the learning institution.

"I believe that aspiration is the key to reducing inequalities in Scotland. We need our children, their families, our workers, our services and our politicians to be aspirational for themselves and others. The Childhood Practice award is one way of building that aspiration. The SSSC showed great aspiration in leading this work, and everyone who participates in and benefits from the award will promote aspiration which will ultimately benefit children. That is good for all of us."

**Anna Fowlie, Chief Executive
SSSC**

SSSC's Workforce Solutions Portal

The one-stop-shop for information and resources on social service workforce development

The SSSC's Workforce Solutions Portal was launched recently and has some exciting new tools for employers and workers. As well as housing current social service workforce development resources the Portal includes tools such as the National Occupational Standards navigator and Preparing for Practice the induction guidance for new staff.

The portal also includes information about:

- staff induction
- career development toolkit
- early years and child care and care and support services resources
- workforce planning guide.

You can find the Workforce Solutions Portal by going to:

<http://workforcesolutions.sssc.uk.com>

Do you support someone undertaking the Childhood Practice award?



Find out about a practice learning qualification that can help you

Practice Learning Qualifications (Social Services) (PLQ (SS)) are for people working in social services who are supporting learning for practice in the workplace. More than 600 people are now doing the Childhood Practice award across Scotland with a range of providers. To read some of their stories visit: www.sssc.uk.com/childhoodpractice



Highlands and Moray Accredited Training Services (HiMATS) are now developing a PLQ(SS) Stage 2 award (PDA Practice Learning Social Services at SCQF Level 9) primarily to support practice learning in early years services, for example for those supporting BA in Childhood Practice students. The award will also be available to other social services workforce candidates and when approved should be available from autumn 2010.

Depending on experience and role, workers can undertake the PLQ(SS) at the stage which is most appropriate for them and arrangements are in place for recognition of

prior learning (RPL). Find out more about the PLQ (SS) Framework and Guidance on RPL and Credit Transfer for the PLQ (SS) at: www.sssc.uk.com



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