

Fife

Early Years Strategy 2009 - 2011



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1. Foreword

This is the first overarching Early Years Strategy for Fife. The strategy has been developed in line with the national Early Years Framework and links with Fife's Community Plan, Children's Services Plan and to Fife's single outcome agreement. The Early Years Strategy sets out our shared vision for Fife's youngest children and their families and details our priorities for 2009 -2011.

In August 2008 the multi-agency Early Years Strategy Group was established and remitted to lead on developing the Early Years Strategy for Fife. In January 2009 a planning workshop was held with key stakeholders representing the many agencies working with young children and families to look at priorities for the plan. Over the coming year consultations will continue with practitioners, agencies, children and families.

The Early Years Strategy Group will monitor the action plan. The Group is made up of representatives from Fife Council, NHS Fife, the Voluntary Sector and the Police. The Group is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the national Early Years Framework through closer integration of the work of all partners to achieve the high aspirations for young children and families in Fife.

Progress of the action plan will be reviewed annually.

2. Introduction

The remit of the Early Years Strategy Group defines the early years as pre birth to aged 8. This recognises the importance of the ante natal period for positive outcomes and key transition points of nursery and primary entry.

The Early Years Framework sets out the case for action with regard to the early years and early intervention and the **transformational change** that needs to happen to deliver the vision of giving all our children the best start in life.

Clearly the notion of early intervention has relevance across age groups to ensure individuals and families are given help at the point of need and before issues escalate. However in the early years the principle of early intervention is particularly relevant as research has shown that interventions can have the most significant impact when delivered early in life.

The Framework identifies 4 key principles of early intervention:

- We want all to have the same outcomes and the same opportunities;
- We identify those at risk of not achieving those outcomes and take steps to prevent that risk materialising;
- Where the risk has materialised, we take effective action;
- We work to help parents, families and communities to develop their own solutions, using accessible, high quality public services as required.

3. Early Years Strategy Group

Core Function

- To establish a clear strategic framework to lead and manage the planning and delivery of early childhood services across Fife and to track and report on progress to the Children's Services Group
- Develop and deliver an Early Years Strategy for Fife in line with the Children's Services Plan, implementation of the Early Years Framework and identified need.
- In addition the Strategic Group will establish mechanisms to ensure effective two way communication and collaboration with key stakeholders, perhaps by providing notes of meeting, plans and information or by inviting representatives from local groups to contribute to meetings

4. Fife – the local context

The Review of Early Years Services in Fife published in 2006 played a major contribution to the evaluation for the improvement of early years services in Fife and this along with the national Framework will be the foundations of our developing Early Years Strategy.

The Review achieved considerable agreement and commitment across the key stakeholder groups. There was also general consensus that the agenda is complex, multi-layered and diverse. Consequently, it was recognised that progress towards the delivery of an integrated early years' service would require careful and focused underpinning support and clarity of strategic direction.

However, the review found that services can be patchy across the Council area with parts of Fife well provided for and others less well so. In addition, the increased volume of services has created a strategic management challenge.

There is commitment within Fife Council and partner agencies to work on developing closer partnerships with the private and independent early years sector to improve outcomes for children, for example, in relation to child protection.

The early years agenda brings fresh challenges. The need for improved preventative and early intervention work is clear with evidence showing us that greater focus on early years and early intervention reaps rewards for a child through improved life chances.

Over time we will hope to see a reduction in the number of young people requiring crisis intervention as a result of greater early years focus. This will enable us to shift resources from high tariff intervention to early years investment.

However we cannot ignore the considerable need to intervene for some young people so a shift in resources is not possible immediately. This, coupled with the

reality that there is no new resource attached to the implementation of the Early Years Framework coming from central government, requires us to think creatively.

There is strong commitment in Fife across services and agencies to work together on a shared vision for improving outcomes for children and families; this can be evidenced by the ongoing support for the Children's Services Plan and related local plans. However, to realise our vision and achieve transformational change for the early years and beyond, there is a need to **work together differently** towards shared outcomes.

The **Big Shout** is a way of working which seeks to ensure that children and young people influence decisions about public services and are active in improving their communities. The vision is one where all children and young people in Fife are able to realise their potential and participate as active citizens, who are valued, understood and involved, and as such we will be proactively taking steps to ensure the voices of our youngest children, and their families, can influence the ongoing development of the Strategy.

5. Planning Framework

A planning framework for intervention to promote a shared understanding of how we support children and young people across services is detailed on page 6. This planning framework has been agreed at the Getting it Right in Fife Group and has sign up from all agencies involved.

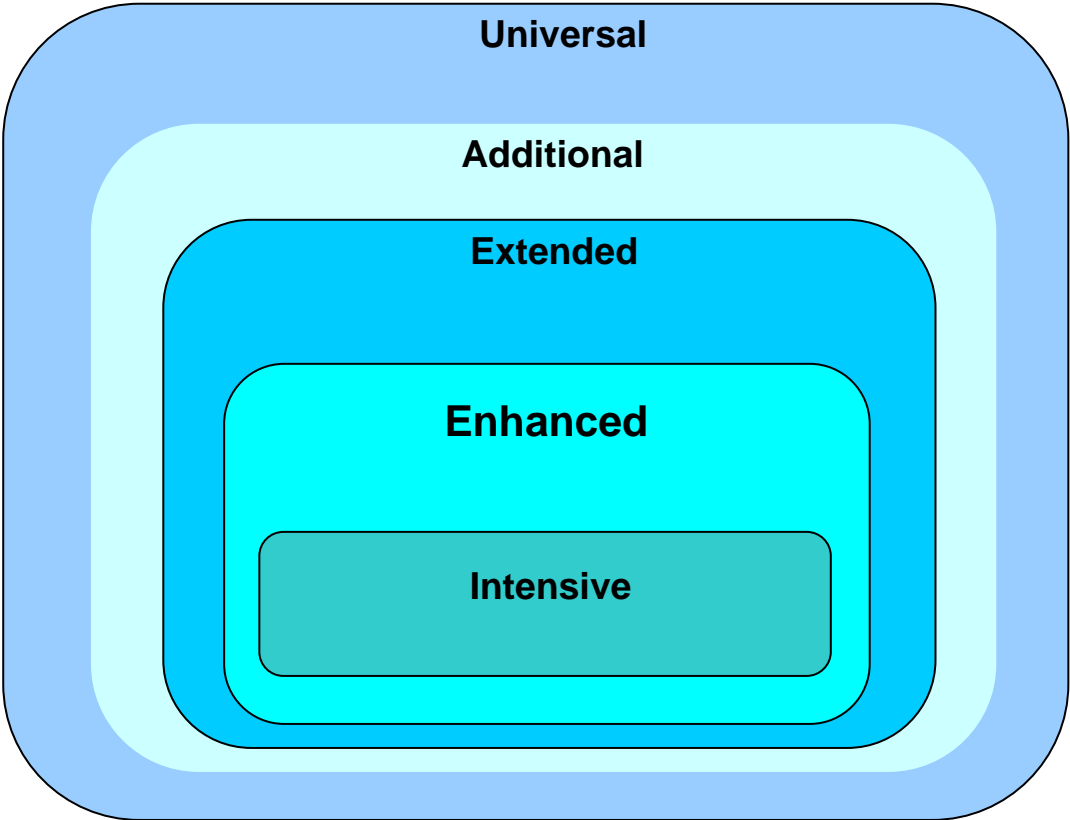
Across Fife, services for children range from universal at level 1 to targeted and specialised provision at level 5. It is a priority to progressively build capacity at level one and to target specialised provision where it is most required; thus working towards **transformational change** and a long-term aim of early investment rather than crisis intervention.

The *Getting it Right for Every Child* agenda acts as a national and local driver. The focus is to ensure that all children receive the help they need, when they need it, in a coordinated least intrusive way. Streamlining processes and procedures is a key theme, as is delivery of services at a local level.

In Fife the **Getting it Right in Fife Group** is developing quality assurance systems that can be used across services to support the drive for improvement. Links between the Children's Service Group, Getting it Right in Fife Group and the Child Protection Committee have been, and will continue to be, strengthened. This will ensure that planning, monitoring and evaluation of our priorities are connected across planning structures to meet the needs of the children and young people in Fife.

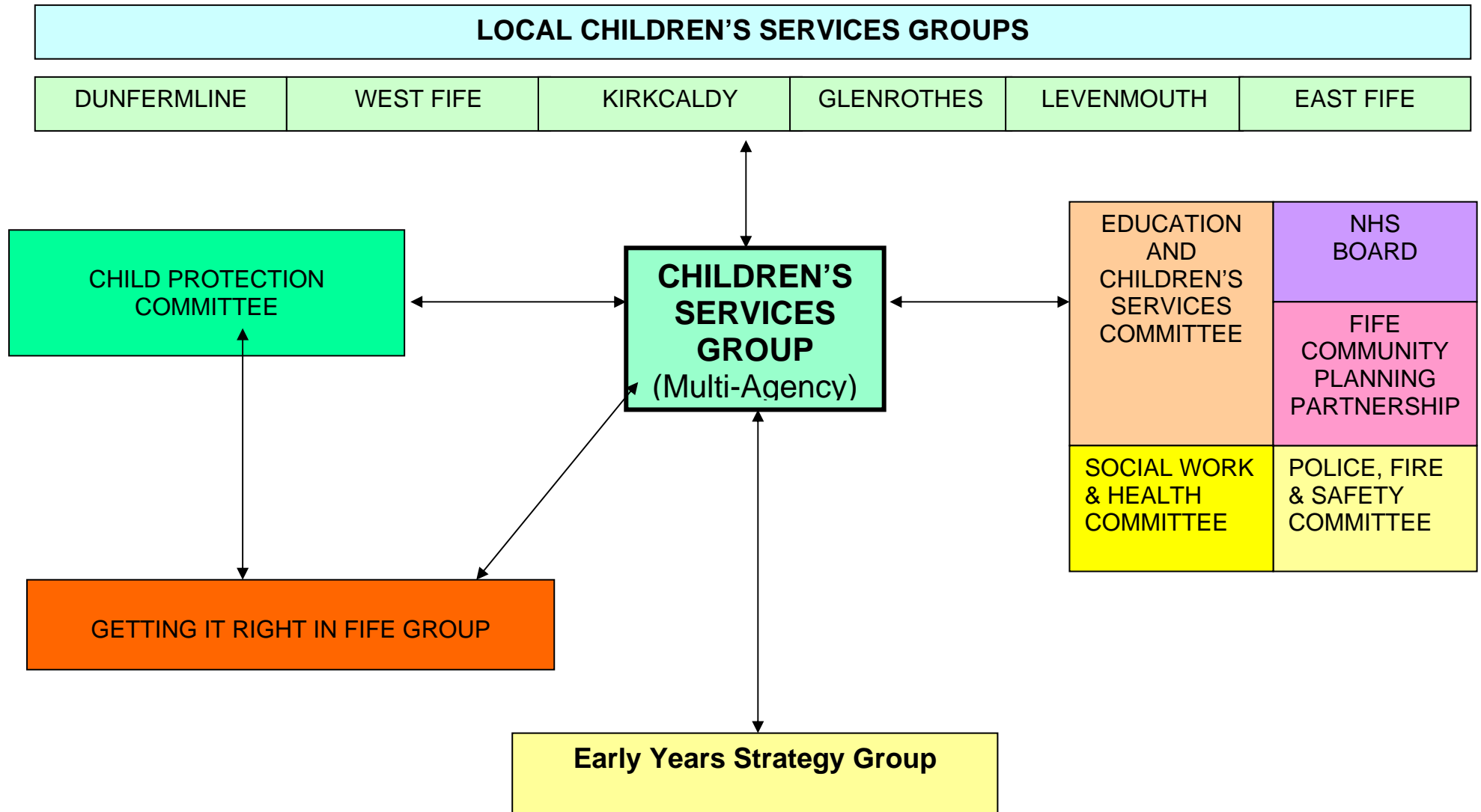
A planning framework to promote a shared understanding of how we support children and young people across services is detailed below. This basic framework has sign up from all agencies involved and will be further developed to show the relevant service delivery in Fife at each level of support.

Services for children in Fife range from universal to enhanced and intensive provision. It is a priority to progressively build capacity at the universal stage and to target specialised provision where it is most required.



The diagram illustrated overleaf represents the framework in which the Early Years Strategy Group relates to the Children’s Services Group, relevant Committees and the local delivery groups.

INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRUCTURES



Part Two

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the Action Plan will be undertaken by the Early Years Strategy Group with regular progress reports going to the Children's Services Group.

The Early Years Framework, Achieving Our Potential and Equally Well are the key strategic frameworks aimed at tackling inequality in Scotland with partnership and collaborative working being central to their delivery.

In Fife we recognise the interconnectedness of these policy areas and will be reporting jointly on progress against all 3 frameworks, and our local interpretations of these – the Early Years Strategy, Joint Health Improvement Plan and Fairer Fife Framework - to the Community Planning Partnership groups.

The evaluation framework on page 11 illustrates the strategic landscape in which this work will be undertaken.

Over the course of 2009/10 we will be working to develop an early years dataset within the Knowlife system which will help inform the work of the Early Years Strategy Group through analysis of population, health and deprivation data.

Related plans & outcomes

The Early Years Strategy is part of a suite of measures in Fife to improve outcomes for children, families and communities. The Strategy is placed within Fife's Children's Services framework and as such there are clear links with the Children's Services Plan.

Outcome measures contained within the Children's Services Plan 2009/11 are shown in the table below:

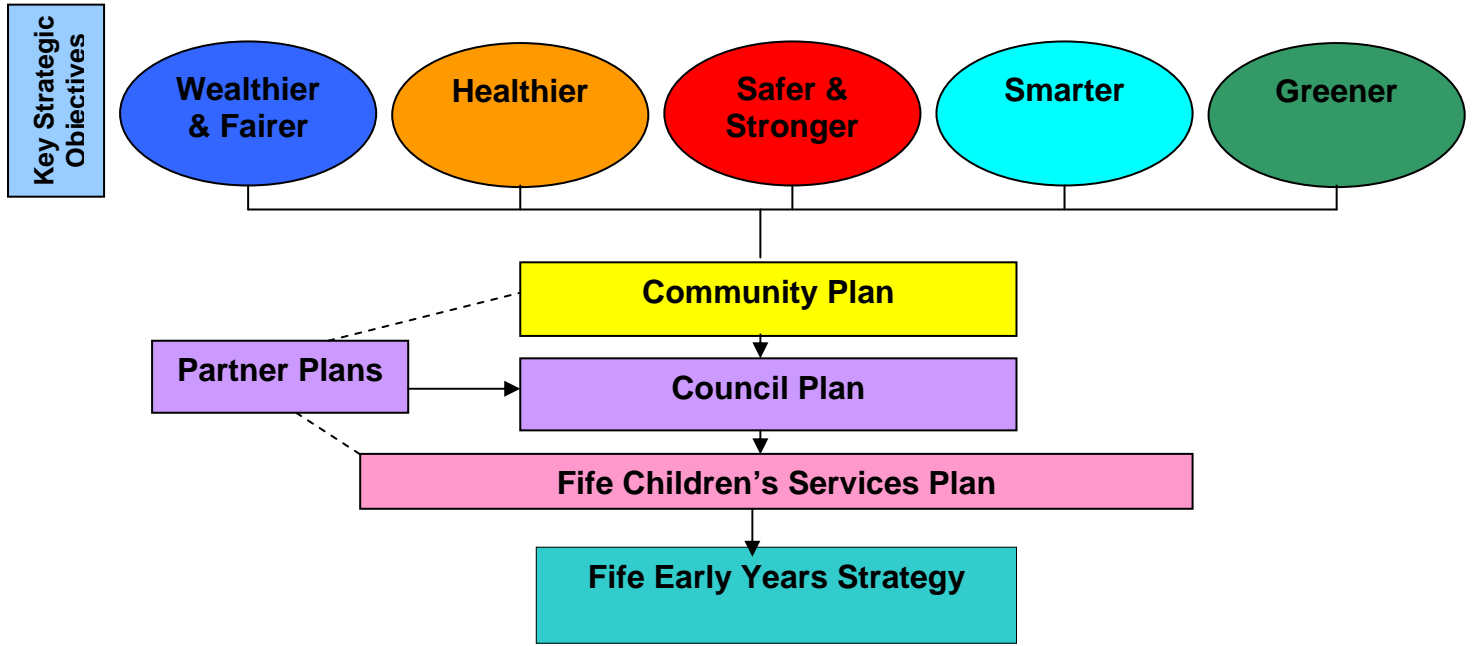
Reduce % of 16-19 year olds not in Employment, Education or Training
Increase percentage of P1 children with no obvious signs of dental disease
Increase % children exclusively breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
Reduce % of 5-15 yr olds who are obese and severely obese
Decrease in number of babies requiring treatment for substance misuse withdrawal
Reduce pregnancy rate among under 16 year olds per 1000 (definition changed in 2008)
Reduce number of persistent offenders
Increase % of referrals for offending behaviour being dealt with by multi-agency partners, rather than Police report to Reporter
Develop multi-agency monitoring of child protection processes and outcomes
Monitor number of referrals for non-offending behaviour being dealt with by multi-agency partners, rather than referral to the Reporter
Reduce accident admission rates for children 15 and under per 1,000 (unintentional injury)
Increase in percentage of looked after children cared for within Fife

The Action Plan covers the period 2010-2011 to bring the Early Years Strategy into line with the Children's Service Plan framework. All actions will contribute to the longer-term objectives of the Early Years Framework.

The Early Years Strategy and related Action Plan will be reviewed annually and adapted to take account of changing need and in line with emerging evidence from data collection and continued consultation.

The diagram overleaf details the evaluation framework within which the work of the Early Years Strategy Group is located.

Evaluation Framework



Purpose	Improved outcomes for all children and families in Fife.
Drivers	<p>National Drivers: Concordat; Early Years Framework; Achieving Our Potential; Equally Well; Getting It Right for Every Child; Health for All Children 4; Curriculum for Excellence.</p> <p>Local Drivers: Single Outcome Agreement; Community Plan; Children's Services Plan; Joint Health Improvement Plan; Big 8; Fairer Fife Framework; Getting it Right in Fife.</p>
Priorities	<p>A coherent approach: A continuum of support from pregnancy throughout childhood with resources used more effectively.</p> <p>Helping Children, families & communities to secure outcomes themselves: Greater capacity amongst parents to improve outcomes for themselves through increased support and improved parenting skills.</p> <p>Using the Strength of Universal services to deliver prevention & early intervention: Early intervention becomes a core value across services in and beyond early years.</p>
What works?	Evidence based, outcome focussed monitoring and evaluation

Fife

Early Years Strategy 2009 - 2011

Action Plan

Early Years Strategy Priorities 2009-2011

A COHERENT APPROACH		
Longer-term objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A continuum of support from pregnancy through to primary school. ○ Resources used more effectively. 		
Fife Medium-term Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation/participation framework developed to engage children, families & communities ○ Monitoring of targeted & mainstream funding to ensure focus on priorities ○ Annual audit of early years in Fife to inform planning & delivery ○ Build links with community planning and adult services. 		
Fife Short-term Actions 2010 - 2011	Outcomes	Lead
Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) to develop Early Years Strategy (EYS) in line with the National Early Years Framework and Fife Children's Services Plan	EYS completed and agreed January 2010	MFerris
EYSG & Corporate Research Team to create an Early Years dataset within Knowfife to map early years populations, services and spend Fife-wide to provide intelligence for planning & policy.		MFerris/ CBarclay/ AMarshall
Local staged intervention processes to be identified and developed across all services		BKirkaldy/ GIRIF Group
EYSG to develop or identify outcome indicators to monitor early years priorities within EYS.		EYSG
Staged Intervention Model developed to inform Integrated Care Pathways		VHatch/ MMoy

HELPING CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO SECURE OUTCOMES THEMSELVES

Longer-term objectives:

- Parents feel better supported and have improved parenting skills
- Greater capacity amongst parents to improve outcomes for themselves.

Fife Medium-term Actions

- Investigate & promote methods of joint service delivery to improve access to family & community learning
- Parenting & early years to become a priority for community development programmes
- Improve support for grandparents and informal carers.

Fife Short-term Actions 2010 - 2011

Outcomes

Lead

Develop an agreed Family Support & Parenting Strategy for Fife.

BKirkaldy

Identify/develop opportunities for all early years workers to improve support to children & families; including:

- Service improvement priorities to increase opportunities for joint training
- Capacity building that fully utilises existing expertise across the Early Years Services
- Staged Intervention Model & Care Pathways agreed and understood across services
- Increase awareness of importance on infant mental health for influencing positive outcomes

EYSG/
CPC
Training
sub

Develop a creative communication framework to improve information for children, families, professionals & communities; including:

- Awareness of importance of early years and play
- Consultation processes appropriate for early years
- Highlighting good practice & sharing news
- Dissemination of learning from Education FSF project

MFerris

USING THE STRENGTH OF UNIVERSAL SERVICES TO DELIVER PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION

Longer-term objectives:

- Early intervention becomes a core value across a wide range of services in and beyond early years.

Fife Medium-term Actions

- Enhance early intervention to address identified gaps
- Utilise universal services to better meet needs of vulnerable children & families
- Help all young people make positive choices about pregnancy & parenthood through Curriculum for Excellence

Fife Short-term Actions 2010 - 2011

Outcomes

Lead

Develop Integrated Care Pathways for antenatal, maternity and post natal care in Fife using the agreed Staged Intervention Approach

VHatch/
MMoy

EYSG to support a redesigned Early Years Education Service and work in partnership to develop a cohesive extended and equitable service across Fife

CLindsay

Ensure awareness of early intervention/ GIRIF principles, including roles and responsibilities, across all services for children via communication strategy.

Develop a Staged Intervention approach based on shared assessment of need across all services for children; including:

- Increased joint working and training
- A shared philosophy and adoption of GIRFEC principles
- Awareness of roles & responsibilities.

BKirkaldy/
GIRIF Group

Membership of EYSG

CHAIR: Carrie Lindsay, Area Education Officer, Education Service

LEAD OFFICER: Mairi Ferris, Early Years Co-ordinator, Community Services

Service/Agency	Representative
Fife Council: Education Service Social Work Community Services - CLD Pre School Educational Home Visiting Service Educational Psychology Integrated Community Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Mason/Pat Caudrey • Theresa Stephenson • Duncan Simpson • Janis Walker • Elly Alexander • Joyce Greig
NHS Fife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxine Moy • Val Hatch
Voluntary Sector working with 0-8 years (one to be from CVS Fife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynn Gillies – Barnardo’s (Chair of Voluntary Sector Children’s Forum) • Rhona Cunningham, Gingerbread
Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Crawford, SCMA
Scottish Preschool Play Association (SPPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandy Mayo, SPPA
Fife Constabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Anderson, Community Safety/Crime Reduction Dept.
National Day Nurseries Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tbc
Co-opted members will attend as necessary e.g. DAAT, Housing, Children’s Reporter, Finance, Development Services, Children’s Rights etc	

References

1. Early Years Framework: Scottish Government and COSLA (December 2008) (www.scotland.gov.uk)
2. Review of Early Years Services in Fife (2006): Available from Mairi Ferris, Fife Council (mairi.ferris@fife.gov.uk)
3. A Healthier Future for Fife: Fife's Joint Health Improvement Plan 2007/10: Available from Vivienne Brown, Fife Council (Vivienne.Brown@fife.gov.uk)
4. Scottish Government: Getting it Right for Every Child (www.scotland.gov.uk)
5. Fife Single Outcome Agreement 2009/11 (www.fifedirect.org.uk)
6. Fife Community Plan 2007/11(www.fifedirect.org.uk)
7. Fife Council Plan 2007/11 (www.fifedirect.org.uk)
8. Fairer Fife Framework 2008 -2010: Available from Robert McGregor, Fife Council (Robert.mcgregor@fife.gov.uk)

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Contact

If you have any feedback on the Early Years Strategy, or require the document in an alternative format or language, please contact:

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The plan will also be available on the Fife Direct Website (www.fifedirect.org.uk)