

Get ready for new ways of delivering early learning^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Good quality, affordable early learning and childcare is a key element of achieving the society we want to live in, and its importance is reflected in the way it has moved to the forefront of every political party's agenda.

Much of the debate, however, has centred on the proposals to extend statutory provision. Yet this is not always the best value - and for a number of families it is simply not working.

That's why we believe the time is right to change the status quo, to reassess our policies, practices and attitudes to parents and ensure optimum support in helping them meet their commitments to both their families and their employers.

Parents are often restricted in their work options due to inflexible or unaffordable early learning and childcare options. And while employers need to be practical and realistic in arranging their working practices, meaningful change cannot happen without bringing everybody round the table.

This is why we are delighted to have launched the Childcare Alliance. Bringing together employers, families, providers and civic society, we want to drive forward change in how Scotland provides for its families, creating a nation where parents are able to return to the workforce in the knowledge that good quality early learning and childcare will be accessible, flexible and affordable, and where employers embrace family-friendly policies that work for both their employees and for them.

Through the alliance and an Associated Partnership Commission for Childcare Reform, Children in Scotland, along with partners, will aim to identify a new model of organising, delivering and paying for quality early learning and childcare. This should be ready by next year.

What we are asking for is generational in scale and ambition and the process of achieving agreement on the fundamentals of reform may take time. But there is energy and enthusiasm for improvement and Children in Scotland are delighted to be at the forefront of this agenda, leading real change for thousands of families across Scotland.

- Jackie Brock is chief executive of Children in Scotland. The Childcare Alliance and the Partnership Commission for Childcare Reform was launched on 26 March.

-reprinted from the Scotsman

Region: Europe^[2]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/04/get-ready-new-ways-delivering-early-learning> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe>