



Scottish Out of School Care Network

Newsletter
June 2023



soscn.org
Scottish Registered Charity SC020520

Welcome

Dear Reader

So here we are at the start of the summer holidays and already we have been experiencing glorious sunshine; we can only hope that this weather continues for your all-day holiday adventures. Just remember the sun screen!

This is the first edition of our new newsletter which will be published three times a year- we are looking to provide you with more information about SOSCN and our work; what's happening on a national sector-wide level, and most importantly sharing practice and ideas across school age childcare services in Scotland. Any feedback will be greatly received, and please send us stories about your service for future editions.

Happy reading!

SOSCN



SOSCN is recruiting for a Practice and Training Officer



35 hours per week; flexible hours; hybrid working (home & office), although there will be an expectation of at least 2 days per week in the Glasgow office during probation period (first 3 months); generous employer pension contribution; 25 days annual leave + 13 public holidays. Salary range £32,000 - £35,000.

Please see this link to find out more: soscn.org/jobs

About SOSCN - Who are we?



Supporting children's rights to play, care and learning

Scottish Out of School Care Network

We are a company limited by guarantee and a Scottish registered charity (SC020520). We receive funding through Scottish Government, administered by CORRA Foundation, but we also have to income generate. We are a membership organisation and over 90% of registered school age childcare services in Scotland are members.

Our Staff



(Full time) Chief Executive Officer – Irene Audain MBE, MA, MEd, Advanced Diploma in Child Development, Diploma Information Science

I have led the Scottish Out of School Care Network since 1993, my involvement in school age childcare before then was as first a volunteer, then paid worker, in setting up the first voluntary sector funded school age childcare service in Scotland in the 1980s. Over my 20s and 30s in a mix of paid and voluntary work, I worked in youth clubs, playgroups, holiday playschemes, did community work, and was a volunteer counsellor for women and children who had experienced abuse. I was awarded an MBE (20 years ago) for my work in developing school age childcare in Scotland.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for overseeing the work of the organisation, and am responsible for grant bids and reporting, linked in with national policy priorities, and with the Board of Directors and senior staff, setting the overall strategic direction of SOSCN. I am currently the lead assessor for Achieving Quality Scotland, produce research and other reports, and the aspect of the job I enjoy most is engaging with service staff, children, and their families.



(Full time) Policy and Research Manager – Andrew Shoolbread MA(Hons) MSc MEd AdvDipEd (Child Development)

I have been working for SOSCN since 2001 and I lead on policy and research, and also oversee, and develop, training and practice resources which includes events and networking opportunities. I enjoy being able to travel around the country with work and engaging with services. I have a particular interest in trauma-informed practice.

Prior to working in SOSCN I taught English and communication for two years in Japan at kindergarten, primary and junior high schools on a small island in the Inland Sea of Japan. I am also a qualified fine bookbinder.



(Full time) Information Officer – Finlay Wright

I have been working for SOSCN since 2007 and I work on the website and membership information amongst other things. I enjoy speaking to members and listening to what they have been doing and trying to help them with any problems they are having.

Before working for SOSCN, I used to work as a support worker with vulnerable young people and also worked in an after school club.



(Part time) Physical Activity Co-ordinator- Greig Cavanagh

I have worked at SOSCN since 2014 as the Activity & Wellbeing Co-ordinator delivering training to out of school care staff across the country. I introduce services to activity resources and demonstrate how to adapt and challenge children through play. I enjoy helping staff develop and introduce new activities to children within their service. I believe that there is a sport out there for every child and out of school care can play a big role in introduce child to that sport through various play opportunities.

My background in sport is mainly through football, I have played for clubs such as Motherwell and Partick Thistle at youth level. I now enjoy running half marathon/marathons. I also enjoy cycling, in 2019 I cycled from Paris to Pisa raising money for Marys Meals.

Our Board



Chair- Anne Dick

I came in to the childcare sector later in life having had a career as an architectural photographer for about 20 years. When my children started attending after school care I joined the parent committee and was tasked with updating all the policies and procedures and that was when I discovered SOSCN. It was a lifeline in helping me manoeuvre my way through the endless policies and legislation. A few years later I changed career and worked my way up to become Manager of the service in 2002. A few years after that, having attended all the SOSCN training and events I could find I was asked to join the SOSCN Board and was very happy to do so in an attempt to give back to the organisation all that I had gleaned over the years. I am still learning!



Treasurer – Ann McKenzie

I have over 40 years of working with people in support, learning or information roles. Background and qualifications in Education and Community Learning, including children's playschemes, youth work and staff training, moving into registered childcare in 1992 for children 0-12. In 1998 I joined One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) to establish flexible childcare, progressing to Chief Operating Officer. Close links between OPFS and SOSCN were well established, and I joined the board in 2010 to continue personal and professional advocacy of the need for sustainable OSC for all families, and the growth and development of quality provisions for school age children.



Board member – Marie McQuade

I am a lecturer in Childhood Practice at the University of Glasgow. Prior to joining the University, I worked as a Policy Manager for the Scottish Government, spending time in the Early Learning and Childcare, and Mental Health Directorates developing and delivering government policy commitments. I have considerable experience delivering professional learning services to early years, education, and out-of-school care practitioners with a specific focus on high-quality practice, family support and leadership. Earlier in my career, working across a variety of early years and school age childcare services, I supported the development and management of projects to deliver improved outcomes for children and families. Current research interests include high quality school age childcare, mentoring, screen education, and early-career leadership development.

I am delighted to be able to take an active role on the board of SOSCN. The role of school age childcare as part of our national infrastructure has long been underestimated and I am keen to support SOSCN's work in ensuring the voices of children, parents and practitioners are promoted, the professionalism of leaders and practitioners recognised, and that SOSCN as the key representative body is front and centre leading the development of the sector.



Board Member – Mairi Ferris

I have worked in play and childcare services for over 20 years, most recently focusing on outdoor play and children's connection to nature.

I joined the board of SOSCN because we are entering a period of change and opportunity in School Age Childcare in Scotland I am excited to play a role in that. I want to support the organisation and its members to respond to the change and enable children & young people across Scotland to be able to access a service which meets their hopes and dreams.

Find out more
about SOSCN at
soscn.org

International Learning Session

Play and Leisure in Australian Out of School Care

by **Andrew Shoolbread**

Talking about out of school care in Australia is a bit of a tongue-twister: it's referred to as Outside School Hours Care (try saying that repeatedly and at speed), or OSHC. We learned this, and more, from Associate Professor Jennifer Cartmel (Jenny) and practitioner Kylie Keane at our recent in-person international learning session. Jenny is a long-term friend and colleague of SOSCN and is one of a very small number of worldwide academics whose research and work focuses solely on school age childcare. Both Jenny and Kylie were attending the International Play Association Conference in Glasgow, and we were very grateful for them to take some time out of their busy schedule to deliver this learning session.

Similarities

Unsurprisingly there are some similarities between school age childcare between Scotland and Australia- not least, the relationship between services and schools. Many Australian services are based within schools and there are often issues with access to premises, storage and use of spaces; relationships between the education staff and services can be difficult, and there can be a lack of understanding and appreciation from the education staff's perspective of the 'informal' play-based practice of the services. Outdoor play, is a priority for services in Queensland with some rural services being able to take children fishing, swimming and surfing at the beach.



Differences

Although Australia's seven states have different rules governing school age childcare it is well-funded for parents by national government and 30% of all school-age children attend. Originally services were delivered by parent and community groups however now, is often delivered by large private companies.

There is a greater degree of flexibility when it comes to staffing- ratios can be as high as 1 adult: 15 children and there are no mandatory qualification requirements across Australia (different states have their own requirements) although school-age childcare-specific qualifications are available. This flexibility does allow sports, arts, etc qualified people to work in services, however, they may not have the appropriate playwork skills and knowledge which is at the heart of service delivery.

“My Time, Our Place. Framework for School Age Care in Australia 2.0”

My Time, Our Place is a national framework for school age childcare in Australia and relates to practice delivery in services rather than a policy perspective; although children’s learning is at the heart of the document, the UNCRC and play are very much guiding strands throughout. It has recently been updated.



There are 8 principles:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Partnerships
- Respect for diversity
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- Equity, inclusion and high expectations
- Sustainability
- Reflective practice and ongoing learning
- Collaborative leadership and teamwork

And 5 outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

When discussing the framework, Jenny mentioned how they are no longer referring to practice as ‘play-based learning’ but ‘playwork’ where play is an intrinsic part of children’s experience. Also, they are now looking at how ‘passive leisure’ can be more widely considered i.e. acknowledging that it’s OK for children to rest and relax, and not constantly having to be ‘doing things’, which is after all the full definition of Article 31: a child’s right to culture, leisure, rest and play.

My Time, Our Place



Feedback

“Thank you so much for all the information from the course I attended on Monday. The course content was absolutely inspirational and Professor Cartmel and Kylie’s presentations were so informative and relevant to my working role. I can’t thank you enough for such a great course.”

My Time, Our Place

<https://acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/MTOP-V2.0.pdf>

Policy and Research

Two New SOSCN Survey Reports Published

Child Poverty and Parental Employment Inquiry evidence submission



Social Justice and Social Security Committee - Official Report 25th May 2023

Irene Audain, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Out of School Care Network gave evidence to the Child Poverty and Parental Employment Inquiry. Please find link to the full video here:

scottishparliament.tv/meeting/social-justice-and-social-security-committee-may-25-2023

The Official Report of the meeting is now available on the Parliament's website and can be accessed by following this link:

archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15338

Workforce Survey

The workforce survey has now been analysed and the report has been published on our website - many thanks to those of you who participated in this survey, your input is greatly appreciated. As ever the results show that staff love working with children, and especially older (school-age) ones. However, the workforce continues to face pressure and stress caused by regulatory expectations and requirements, paperwork and ongoing staffing difficulties alongside part-time hours and generally low pay.

Download the survey: soscn.org/downloads/research/osc-worforce-survey-results-2022.pdf

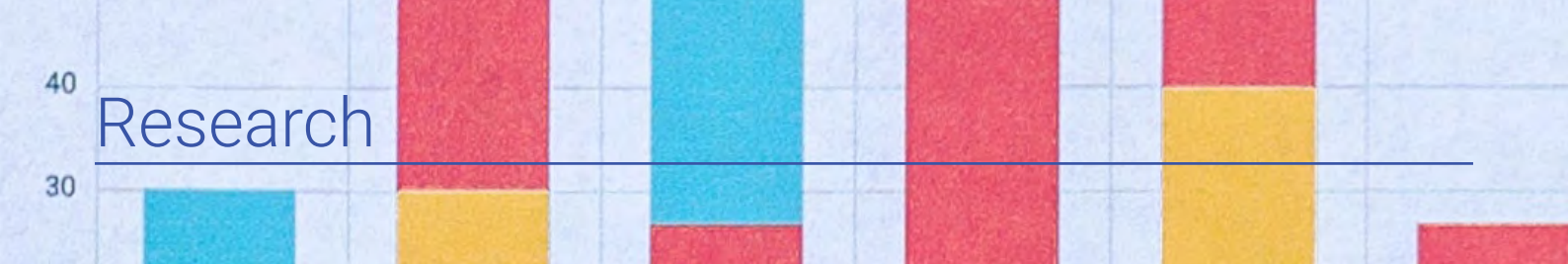
Parent Survey

The parents survey had a great response with 350 completed submissions. This too has been analysed and the report is now available on our website. The survey results show that just under 50% of parents were unable to access sufficient or any school age childcare which was having a major impact on their ability to work or take up employment which had a corresponding impact on household income or wellbeing. As a follow-up to this we are meeting with representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions in Scotland who are looking at the issue of childcare as a barrier to access or remain in employment. For a short summary, please see the recent blog here:

soscn.org/blog/lack-of-access-impact-survey

Download the survey:

soscn.org/downloads/reports/limited-or-lack-of-sac-parent-carer-impact-survey.pdf



Out of School Care Workforce Survey Results 2022 consideration: what needs to happen to improve recruitment and retention in the OSC workforce?

by Andrew Shoolbread

In our recently published 2022 Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce survey, nearly every single respondent said that the best thing about working in school age childcare was the children, and many specified that they liked working with this age group, rather than pre-school. Furthermore, 78% of workers said that they saw working in OSC as a career and that 95% were either 'very or fairly satisfied' working in the sector.

If this is the case, why are services struggling to retain and recruit staff?

Unsurprisingly, low pay; lack of sufficient hours; lack of professional recognition; high levels of responsibility, and regulation compliance were the most commonly cited reasons. In addition to these, access to, and cost of, transport; journey-to-work times; universal credit requirements to work more hours; poor work/life/education balance; access to, and cost of, qualifications and training; and cost of living crisis were all additional factors.

What needs to happen?

Of course additional money is required, but it's more than that: for improvement to happen, it will require a collaborative approach from government bodies, regulators and the sector itself, and a shared agreement for some brave decisions and potentially big changes to be made. If we consider when legislation relating to the inspection and regulation of services, and then regulation of the workforce, came into being pre-2010 we were looking at a very different future. The 2008 recession was yet to hit so generally, people were better off financially; there was more money to fund qualifications and training; many local authorities had OSC-specific development and support staff (and even delivered their own OSC services), and 1140 hours of ELC was not even being considered. Fast forward to what we have now and we are looking at a very different landscape: we have a cost of living crisis; large cuts in public budgets; 1140 hours ELC expansion; and a commitment to expand entitlement to childcare for 1 and 2-year olds, and of course, expand access to school age childcare for low or no-income households.

Currently childcare services are competing amongst themselves for staff, and other sectors, where childcare workers are not using their professional skills and knowledge, are providing more attractive job opportunities- this is simply not sustainable or desirable.

If, as a country, we are looking at an ambitious future for quality childcare, unless the foundations (which may mean legislation) are changed and developed to support a strong and vibrant workforce it will be impossible to realise the plans. Quite simply, despite wanting to work in OSC (and childcare more generally), people can no longer afford to do so - the workforce is our greatest asset and must be supported accordingly.

OSC Workforce Survey Results:

soscn.org/downloads/research/osc-worforce-survey-results-2022.pdf

SOSCN Football Coaching

Get in touch
for sessions
in October



SOSCN's Physical Activity and Wellbeing Coordinator, Greig Cavanagh, has recently delivered some football coaching sessions to members. Sessions took place in the Easter holidays with BASIC in Helensburgh, and Mearns After Care Service (MACS) in Newton Mearns. These sessions are low-cost and last two hours during which children will be introduced to football skills such as passing, dribbling, and shooting as well as having the opportunities to play small-sided games at the end. All the equipment for these sessions is provided by SOSCN, all services need is a suitable space for the training to take place. Below are some images and feedback from staff and the children who took part over the Easter holidays. If you are interested in booking a session in future, please see this link:

form.jotform.com/222551925410045

"Greig was great with the children – he went above and beyond to ensure everyone had a fair turn..." Staff Member

"Was very enjoyable, different activities throughout to keep kids attention." Staff Member

"The children thoroughly enjoyed the session and it worked well spitting the group into age and stage appropriateness." Staff Member

"I found the session to be fun for both the children who enjoy football and those who have little interest. The coach was very engaging and was constantly praising the children for their attempts at different football skills." Staff Member

"As far as I was told all the children who took part had a great time and were disappointed when the session ended." Staff Member

"It was fun." Charlotte

SOSCN Get Ready for Summer Training

Training Report -
Mon 12th June
2023

Summer Games -
Activity Booklet



Greig has also recently delivered a 2-hour training session in Glasgow to assist services in creating a summer games event within their service. Participants were introduced to 5 games to make up the summer games activities with ideas for how to make sure all children's abilities are met. Participants were also taken through creative ways to involve the children in preparing for the games, such as making medals, t-shirts, and flags, and were provided with a 'how to' guide after the training to take back to their service. SOSCN thanks everyone who took part in the day. Below is some of the feedback.

"I really enjoyed this session, it's given me more to think about for this summer's activity plans."

"I am going to take this content back to my colleagues, interesting topics. The summer resource is great, we will be using this throughout our summer holiday club."



We are making the accompanying booklet for the training available to our members. You can download the booklet at the links below.

Booklet: soscen.org/downloads/news/get-ready-for-summer-booklet.pdf

Template Certificate for Children: soscen.org/downloads/news/get-ready-for-summer-certificate.pdf

Local Authority Spotlight

North Ayrshire Council

Despite school age childcare not being a statutory service some local authorities choose to support out of school care because they recognise the benefits it brings to supporting families and the local economy. In this initial article, North Ayrshire council share how they are making school age childcare a priority in their local anti-poverty agenda.



In North Ayrshire we recognise the importance of all school age childcare provision both in terms of providing childcare to enable parents to access opportunities for training and employment, as well as the high-quality play and learning experiences they provide to those within their care. We are incredibly fortunate to work in partnership with 8 private and voluntary organisations working across 11 locations throughout the authority.

In February 2020, North Ayrshire Council approved a proposal to support the school age childcare sector by implementing the following:

1. Providing free lets in school establishments with Early Learning and Childcare settings.
2. Creating and supporting the delivery of a learning and development pathway for out of school care staff.
3. The creation and support of an Out of School Care Network to enable the sector to share practice, information, and resources.

There were several challenges facing school age childcare at that point, and this was exacerbated with the onset of the Covid19 pandemic.

The OSC Network began to meet online in early 2021. There was an immediate recognition of the benefit of bringing the providers together in order to discuss their challenges collectively and share their experiences and possible solutions. It also allowed us as an authority to identify areas where we could support, and an effective working partnership was created.

These provisions have been successful in supporting and sustaining the sector, particularly during recovery from the COVID pandemic and now 9 out of 11 services are based in school premises with no let charge. In one case, the out of school care staff have signed up to a key holding agreement which allows them to open and close the school building during the holiday periods, alleviating the need for a janitor and, therefore, the requirement for a let charge.

North Ayrshire recently held a mini enquiry to examine the role childcare plays in tackling child poverty. Around 60 people from a variety of groups and organisations attended including representation from our school age childcare providers. Childcare plays a vital role in tackling child poverty, and it is our shared responsibility to tackle this issue.

We will continue to work with and support our school age childcare providers as this is such a valued partnership for us in North Ayrshire. We also appreciate the support and guidance we receive from SOSCN ensuring we are moving in the right direction.

Article from our Partners

Scottish Government School Age Childcare programme team updates



The School Age Childcare programme team in the Scottish Government want to thank SOSCN for the opportunity to input into their summer newsletter. It's been a really busy and exciting few months.

We wanted to take this opportunity before the summer break to provide you with an update on our programme of work, our investments this year and some upcoming work we will be taking forward over the next few months.

On 3 April 2023, the First Minister announced a £15 million investment for 2023–2024 to support our commitment to design and build a new system of school age childcare, targeted at those families who need it most.

Investments

The £15 million investment includes

- Continued investment in our Access to Childcare projects and our early adopter communities, currently delivering funded school age childcare to over 1500 families in some of our most deprived communities
- Support to identify and fund new early adopter communities across Scotland (including in a remote, rural area)
- £2m fund in partnership with the Scottish Football Association to support more after school and holiday club provision through local football clubs in deprived areas
- £4.5m funding to make improvements to the school estate to support increased provision of after school and holiday clubs

This package of funding will continue to be targeted towards low income families, using the lens of the six priority groups as identified in the Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, and will be spread across a diverse range of communities in Scotland.

A key focus of our approach over the next year is to test change. By doing this, we are learning more about what works to deliver childcare solutions for school age children and their families in communities to support employment and improve outcomes for target families.

Engagement and co-design

Children

We have co-designed a Children's Charter for School Age Childcare with children from five primary schools across Scotland and a young carers group, and we're aiming to publish it shortly. The Charter sets out the children's thoughts about why we need school age childcare, how school age childcare should be run and by whom, where it should take place, and what activities should be on offer. It also sets out principles which the children agreed should be respected in school age childcare settings.

The finished Charter is important to our co-design approach. We will use it to make sure that when we make decisions about a school age childcare system, we think about what is really important to children, and we're looking forward to hearing how providers might plan to use it.

Parents and providers

Beginning in June 2022 we've been running a People Panel for school age childcare, and have engaged with 100 parents and 30 providers across Scotland, to talk about how affordable school age childcare might support parents and carers into work, and how it might help protect them from leaving work. We heard about the complexity of managing work and family commitments, which they called the work/life paradox.

Earlier this year, we went on to test our co-design approach by working with parents, providers and other support organisations in a Glasgow community to explore how we move from discussing problems to collaborating on solutions. We aim to publish a report about this shortly. We'll learn from this experience and build on it as we begin to look at how we can build community collaboration into our community tests of change.

Provider focus

We'll be spending time over the summer recess planning engagement with providers across Scotland, which we'll be taking out to you in late summer / early autumn. There will be the opportunity to sign up for sessions – please keep an eye on social media and email, and SOSCN will be helping us to make contact with more details. As part of these sessions, we'll be sharing what we've learned about children's, parents' and carers' needs for school age childcare, and speaking with you about what you, as providers, need to be able to support your families and communities.

Delivery Framework

We have also been readying our School Age Childcare Delivery Framework for publication. The delivery framework will outline our school age childcare commitments and the action areas we will focus on over the next 3 years. It will also describe our transformational approach and the principles that we will apply as we design and build a new system of school age childcare. We are taking a people-centred and place-based approach which means that the system and the services which make up the future school age childcare offer will be co-designed with the people who use them, and the people who deliver and support them.

Article from our Partners

Care Inspectorate - Get Ready for Summer

Summer is coming and the Care Inspectorate wants to ensure school-age childcare settings are prepared for those wonderful summer days. They have put together this 'Get ready for summer' fact sheet to help you with your summer planning.

Wishing all children, families, and staff a happy, sunny summer, from the Care Inspectorate.



Get Ready for Summer fact sheet

Relationships and personal plans

Caring for children involves staff being responsive and sensitive in meeting children's needs. Children need a balance of independence, risk, new experiences, familiar routines, support and connections. When these needs are met, children will play and learn because they feel safe and secure.

School-age childcare environments should be fun, challenging, stimulating, and places where children feel loved and respected. They should also be safe and make children feel protected. Strongly connected relationships and knowledge of individual children's needs are key to their safety and wellbeing.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that children are safe, secure, and protected from harm.

For many children, it may be their first time attending a school-age childcare setting, or they may only come during the school holidays. For others, the longer days might result in changes to their normal care routines or needs.

How do you ensure each child's needs are considered, responded to and planned for with families? Consider if children's personal plans need to be reviewed in preparation for their attendance over the summer holiday period.

Strong relationships with children and families support the development of positive summer holiday routines and activities. We recognise that in some settings there may be staff changes due to summer holiday provision. For example, additional staff may be needed or some staff may only have worked term-time.

How does staff deployment in your setting meet the individual care and support needs of all children throughout the summer holiday period? Consider how staffing changes might impact children's experiences and make plans to support them and their families with these new arrangements. Are children cared for by a consistent group of adults who can meet their individual needs and support them to build trusting relationships?

Children's trips and outings

Trips and outings provide opportunities for children to connect with their local community, build on their learning, develop new interests, promote health and wellbeing, and grow an appreciation for nature and their environment.

School-age childcare settings will have some great trips and outings planned over the summer holiday period, and we know how much children benefit from these experiences.

Strongly connected staff, child and family relationships, and knowledge of the individual child are key when planning trips and outings to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

The Care Inspectorate's Keeping Children Safe practice notes will support your thinking when planning children's trips and outings. This includes a range of reflective questions linked to the headings below.

- **Assessing the environment**
- **Staff/adult roles and responsibilities**
- **Staff communication**
- **Family engagement**
- **Knowing and understanding the children in your care**
- **Children in their school-age childcare setting**

Many children will spend longer periods of time in their school-age childcare setting over the summer holidays. When children have a strong connection to their care environment and the people in it, exposure to new experiences builds self-esteem and wellbeing. Children's involvement in the design of their summer holiday routines and activities strengthens how we meaningfully listen to and act upon the voice of the child.

How do we know that the design of our setting supports children's care, play, and learning needs over a long day? Consider how the indoor and outdoor environments are structured and resourced to take account of all children's stages of development and support needs. Here are some points for you to consider.

Rest and relaxation - do children have a variety of comfortable and welcoming spaces where they can rest and relax throughout the day?

Play experiences - do children experience a range of interesting and inviting play experiences across all times of the day? Are children able to lead their own play and make independent choices that reflect their needs and interests?

Eating and drinking - do children have comfortable and social spaces to safely enjoy their meals and snacks? Are children able to freely access drinks to keep them hydrated? Are children supported to enjoy meals and snacks that meet good nutrition standards? If packed lunches are provided by parents, are there any hints and tips you can give them to help keep these healthy?

Risk assessment - is the layout or use of space different from how it is used in term-time? How are children supported to become familiar with any new spaces? Are spaces effectively assessed to ensure risks are minimised.

The Care Inspectorate's SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) campaign Let's Keep Children Safe, raises awareness of how and why children could leave a setting without a responsible adult. The principles of our SIMOA resource can help you to keep children safe, both within your setting and on outings.

Safe - Be alert to all potential risks in your setting.

Inspect - Look around and inspect the environment to make sure a child can't leave an area without staff.

Monitor - Regularly check that all children are accounted for particularly when they are outside, on outings or using transport.

Observe - Observe children and think about their feelings and emotional security - use these observations to support children to feel loved and secure.

Act - Assess and take action to keep children safe.

Supporting resources

[A positive approach to risk in play](#)

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

[Food Matters](#)

[Guide for providers on personal planning](#)

[Keeping children safe](#)

[Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act Campaign](#)

[Our Creative World](#)

[Playwork principles](#)

[Sun safety](#)

Quick wins

Here are some areas you may want to review before the summer holiday fun begins.

- Children's contact information, including GP details and emergency contacts.
- Children's medication and allergy requirements.
- Risk assessments for indoor and outdoor environments in your school age childcare setting.
- Risk assessments for trips and outings.
- Children's access to resources.
- Storage of lunch and snacks in the setting and on trips and outings.
- Children's access to sunscreen and shade.
- Children's access to the setting, including toilet facilities.
- Parents access to the setting, along with contact details, for parents to get in contact if children are on a trip or an outing.
- Summer holiday planning preparation for all staff - reviewing key policies and procedures, including child protection and safeguarding.
- Pick-up and drop-off arrangements.
- Procedures to ensure children do not leave the school-age childcare setting unaccompanied.

Article from our Partners

Skills Development Scotland - Planning for the Future of Early Learning and Childcare

In this article, SDS give an overview of things to come with the Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan.



Skills
Development
Scotland

The childcare sector is transforming in Scotland. The sector plays an important role in giving Scotland's children the best possible start in life, and is well proven to support attainment and, in turn, help tackle poverty. The sector makes a significant contribution to Scotland's economy, and is vital for enabling parents and carers to participate in work, training and learning.

In response to Scottish Government's commitment to expansion to 1140 hours, Skills Development Scotland facilitated the development of Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP can be accessed from ELC Skills Investment Plan

The development and publication of the SIP was overseen by the ELC skills group. A key role of the skills group is to ensure that skills challenges and opportunities in the sector are articulated by industry and understood, prioritised and effectively addressed through planning and investment in skills. Overtime the membership of the ELC skills group has evolved to include representation from the school aged childcare sector, reflecting the change in policy priorities. Scottish Out Of School Care Network (SOSCN) are active members of the skills group.

In the Programme for Government 2022/23 , the Scottish Government made a number of commitments for the childcare sector. These included designing an all-year-round school-age childcare system, and building an evidence base to inform a high-quality learning and childcare offer for one- and two-year-olds. In October 2022, the Scottish Government published Best Start, its strategic early learning and school age childcare plan for 2022-26 committing to progressing, embedding, and realising the benefits of childcare expansion, ensuring workforce ambitions, and supporting quality improvement in childcare.

In response to the new policy context and changing operating environment SDS commissioned research to review the existing SIP and consider skills priorities which better fit the childcare sector's growth ambitions. This work comprised an examination of key drivers of change affecting the sector including a review of strategic and operational context;

economic and labour market analysis, policy context and impact of pandemic; a refresh of evidence of the demand for and supply of skills (utilising existing datasets); working with the skills group and other partners to and identify key priorities and strengthen the skills narrative.

The research confirms that recruitment remains a challenge in the childcare workforce with little signs of easing. An overarching and persistent issue is around the terms and conditions, both real in and some case, perceived, the quality of employment and sector attractiveness.

The research acknowledged that Childcare is becoming more complex and so new and current members of the workforce must have the skills to respond. This means that childcare qualifications across all learning pathways must provide learners with the skills they need, including meta skills, and the ability to adapt to change and demonstrate employment resilience.



These skills must also be embedded in the existing workforce through upskilling, reskilling and potentially repurposing of skills and experience. It will benefit learners to have access to good quality and varied work experience, across age groups, types of settings and types of care. This will give them a wider knowledge of different parts of the sector, a breadth of skills and experience, and inform career choices. The research identifies key priorities such as: upskilling the existing workforce, continued focus on continuous professional learning, building leadership capabilities, diversity and inclusion, better aligning education and learning with industry need, and articulation of clear career pathways.

Collaboration has always been at the heart of SDS's approach to meeting the needs of Scotland's people, places, and economy. We are committed to working in partnership with key partners, industry and other public sector organisations to address the skills challenges facing the childcare sector. SDS will continue to work with SOSCN and the skills group to take this forward. We also look forward to continuing working in partnership with Scottish Government as it embarks on the delivery and intensification of the childcare commitments as stated in the programme for government.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's national skills body.

[skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

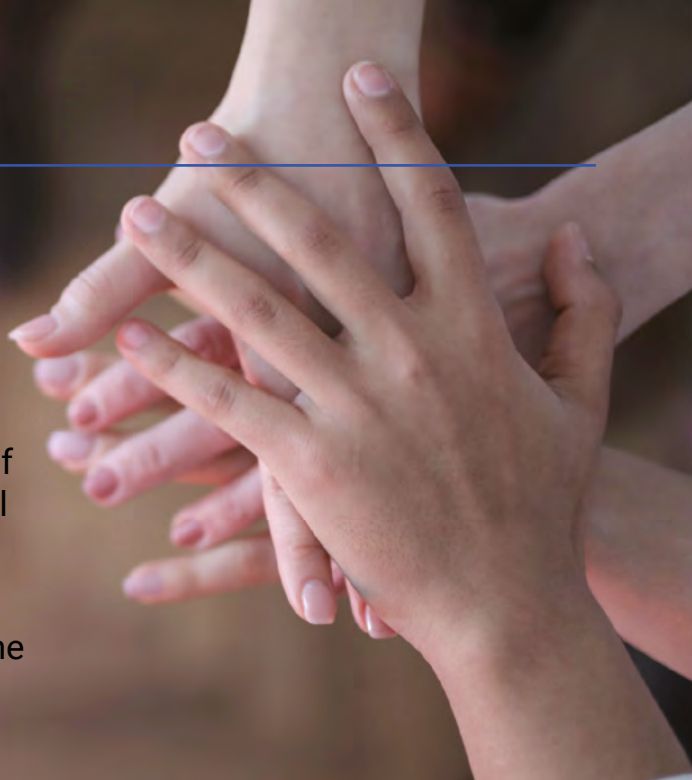
Guest Article

Rookie Rockstars - A Brief History and the Importance of Collaboration

by *Elaine Brackenridge*

In this article, Elaine Brackenridge shares the story of Rookie Rockstars, a breakfast club and out of school care covering Lenzie and Kirkintilloch that Elaine opened in the summer of 2021.

Elaine has now left the service and we wish her all the best for the future, and many thanks for contributing this inspirational story.



Background

Having spent over 25 years in education and retiring early, I was asked to set up and open an out of school care provision within our local area. Although I had worked with children for many years, I had no idea what was involved in setting up and managing a breakfast club and after school care provision. Consequently, I was on another learning curve and climbing on the vertical trajectory.

Getting Started

It was an exciting, busy time setting up the service, for example, preparing policies, creating a range of forms and letters, recruiting staff, reading, researching and most importantly, meeting parents and children. This was done whilst taking cognisance of the guidelines set out by the Care Inspectorate and SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council).

It was during this initial reading and research period that I came across the Scottish Out of School Care Network and I am so glad that I did! SOSCN has been a life saver in so many ways with staff have been available to chat to me or email me when I asked a question or required help. Thank you SOSCN!

Our service, Rookies After School Care and Breakfast Club opened on 23 August 2021 with only three children in attendance; however, I am pleased to say that we have just over one hundred children attending in May 2023.

Our service grew steadily from August 2021 to June 2022 and it became clear that we should apply for a variation to our registration which would enable us to increase the number of children attending. Thankfully, this was successful because little did we know that we were going to have a 'tsunami' of enquiries and registrations during July and August 2022 as unfortunately, two local out of school care services were closing. Since then, Rookies has continued to grow on the upwards trajectory, although thankfully, not so much on the vertical!

Building the Service

Our aim to provide a warm, welcoming, positive and caring environment applies to our setting and to all families, services, schools and indeed anyone connected to us.

Consequently, it has been pleasing to have established open and friendly relationships with school staff from the schools that we serve.

We have children from seven schools and as we were unknown to these schools, I made a call to establish a connection with staff and to inform them of our new service. I was keen to establish good relationships and to find out the protocols for dropping and collecting children from school.

School staff were provided with the names of the children attending the service and parents were also asked to confirm that their child was attending.

On reflection, serving seven schools is probably too many but as you will have noted, we were newbies and still are!



Logistics and Timetables

Our protocol has been to send a weekly timetable to schools outlining which children will be attending sessions on each day of the week. When new children are registered, schools continue to be informed by parents and via our weekly registers.

We have two minibuses and a seven-seater car to take and collect children from school, consequently, careful, robust planning is required to ensure that all children are taken and collected from school safely.

The Importance of Collaboration

As we opened nearing the end of the pandemic, Rookies staff were asked to wait at specific meeting within the school grounds to collect children and although this initially worked well, when we were inundated with registrations during the summer of 2022, particularly from one school where 36 children had registered, I felt that this was no longer safe to do.

I called the Head Teacher of this particular school to discuss my concerns about the number of pupils coming from different quarters of the school and making their way across a busy

playground to meet Rookies staff. The Head Teacher was able to offer the school dining hall as a safe, internal meeting place for those children attending our service. It was also agreed that Rookies staff would collect Primary 1 and Primary 2 pupils from their classrooms between 2.50pm and 2.55pm. This arrangement has ensured that all children meet our staff safely within the confines of the school before travelling to the setting and has facilitated the opportunity for our staff to build good relationships with class teachers and other staff within the school.

Since the pandemic, most schools are now inviting Rookies staff into the school building to collect children. Staff have been welcoming and helpful keeping us up to date if a child is absent or has been sent home early; likewise, Rookies staff inform schools if there are changes to timetables. It has been lovely to be thanked by staff from various schools for our organisation.

We have also received the notes from Team Around the Child meetings in relation to one of our children and have been invited to attend the next meeting.

In the spirit of Getting It Right for Every Child, it is crucial that all professionals involved with children have an opportunity to provide information about how the child presents within their setting. This should help to ensure that agreed strategies are implemented across different settings, providing consistency of approach for the child involved.

Building positive relationships with schools has been important; a smile and quick chat goes a long way!

Where are we now

We are members of SOSCN and two WhatsApp Groups involving managers from other provisions within our own regional area and across Scotland. We are impressed with the clear commitment of managers and staff to get it right for the children in their care. The help that we have received has been invaluable and we remain very thankful.

At this stage, May 2023 we are almost at capacity, with a waiting list and registrations for 2024 already received.

I am finally retiring at the end of May and will always value what I have learned from my staff, the various managers of other services and from the children in my care. I have also learned about the depth and scale of the work involved in managing an out of school care provision, I had no idea!

It has been my pleasure to work with such committed professionals for almost two years... but not quite!

I wish everyone continued success, as you strive to provide the best care and learning experiences for children across Scotland.

I have loved serving this sector albeit for a short time.

Elaine Brackenridge

WHERE ARE WE?

ROOKIES AFTER SCHOOL CARE & BREAKFAST CLUB IS RUN OUT OF HOME CHURCH, LAMMERMOOR ROAD, KIRKINTILLOCH, G66 2AB

MON-FRI 7.30AM-9.00AM & 3.00PM-6.00PM

Contact us on: **0141 404 0057**
www.rookierockstars.org.uk

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3 Dalrymple Court
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Guest Article

St Mirins Out of School Care - A healing woodland in the southside of Glasgow- how a trauma informed approach by St Mirins OSC is transforming lives

by *Andrew Shoolbread*

Many thanks to St Mirins for this wonderful story of the work they have been doing.

Hearing the birdsong and following twisting paths amongst the trees which lead variously to giant 'bird houses', a fire-pit area, a mud kitchen, an outdoor music area and a chill out zone, I'm amazed by the transformation of this area from an overgrown strip of woodland to a child-centred nature-based play space. St Mirins Out of School Care is based within a primary school of the same name in the southside of Glasgow, and the bordering abandoned woodland has been transformed over a 2+ year period through financial support provided by the Scottish Government's Access to Childcare Fund (ACF).



Playwork has always been at the heart of St Mirin's practice and the staff's hard work and dedication was recognised earlier in the year when they received the Frontline Playwork Award at the 13th Annual Playwork Awards, a UK-wide award. Margaret McLelland, manager of St Mirins has long-known about, and actively promoted, the importance of play in supporting children's development and general wellbeing, as well as the building of social relationships, so it is no surprise the service is now also being recognised as a specialist trauma-informed service which is able to provide tailored support to children and families before, during and after school, and all-day during holidays.

Financial support from the ACF has enabled staff to implement their play, trauma and wellbeing practice to transform the outdoor space, deliver evening play sessions and implement a system which works in partnership with the school to deliver extra support not only to low-income families but also to families which might be facing some form of crisis or trauma. For example, the service provides a breakfast club which some children use a 'soft start' to the day and sometimes supports children for the first 15 minutes of school prior to them entering the class. This approach can also be taken during breaks within the school day: fundamentally they support those transition times for children who can find the change disruptive or difficult. During



these periods the OSC staff support outdoor play in the woodland area, and also encourage meditative/mindfulness exercises and positive affirmation approaches.

Each child has individual action/support plans based around GIRFEC and SHANARRI wellbeing outcomes which are developed in partnership with the children, families, school and out of school care to provide consistency of care and support throughout the child's whole day (before, during and after school). Although the school is able to refer children, sometimes older children will self-refer.

The project is having positive results: the holistic and partnership approach is seeing benefits within the school in terms of more contented children and increased learning; and all children (regardless of whether they attend the OSC) are now daily accessing the woodland area, with all the benefits that outdoor play brings. As trusted relationships are key, Margaret reports that children feel more connected, less scared and more likely to problem solve than before.



Staff wellbeing is also high on the service's agenda and now forms part of discussions during weekly staff meetings. Margaret is a strong believer in the philosophy that "to look after others, we also need to look after ourselves" and this approach certainly pays off as St Mirins has high staff retention with many workers having worked there for well-over 10, and even 20, years.

Although the outcomes are positive and encouraging, the journey has been far from simple- the initial round of ACF funding was made available during COVID; there were health and safety regulations which had to be overcome; attitudes which had to be changed; trusting relationships which had to be built, and of course, there was the cost. To transform the outdoor space and implement the extra support has meant additional staff costs and hours, which would have been impossible to deliver without significant additional funding, so it is extremely positive that the Scottish Government has continued to fund this successful project for another year.

The biggest challenge for the future is not just how this project will continue to be funded, but how it can be successfully replicated within out of school care services and schools across Scotland. As one parent whose child has benefitted from the support said, "I just don't understand why it's not everywhere."

To see more about the approach St Mirins is taking, please watch the following video: "What is it they are doing? How OSC supports children and communities to thrive."

vimeo.com/770768204



Practical Activities Ideas

Here's a few ideas that can easily be done in your service this summer

You may need to find purchase a few things, however, some of the items should be easily found within your service already. Hopefully, with some nice weather over the holidays you will be able to take these activities outdoors. Although, perhaps the water-balloons are best left outdoors whatever the weather.



Lego Zipline

This activity can be fun for all ages. Ask the children to make their own slide for a Lego person and then help them find somewhere to string the zip-line to. Test different changes in heights and tautness to the line to see what works best. You can change what you use for the line to see if anything causes less friction. Or you can set up two lines and race them.

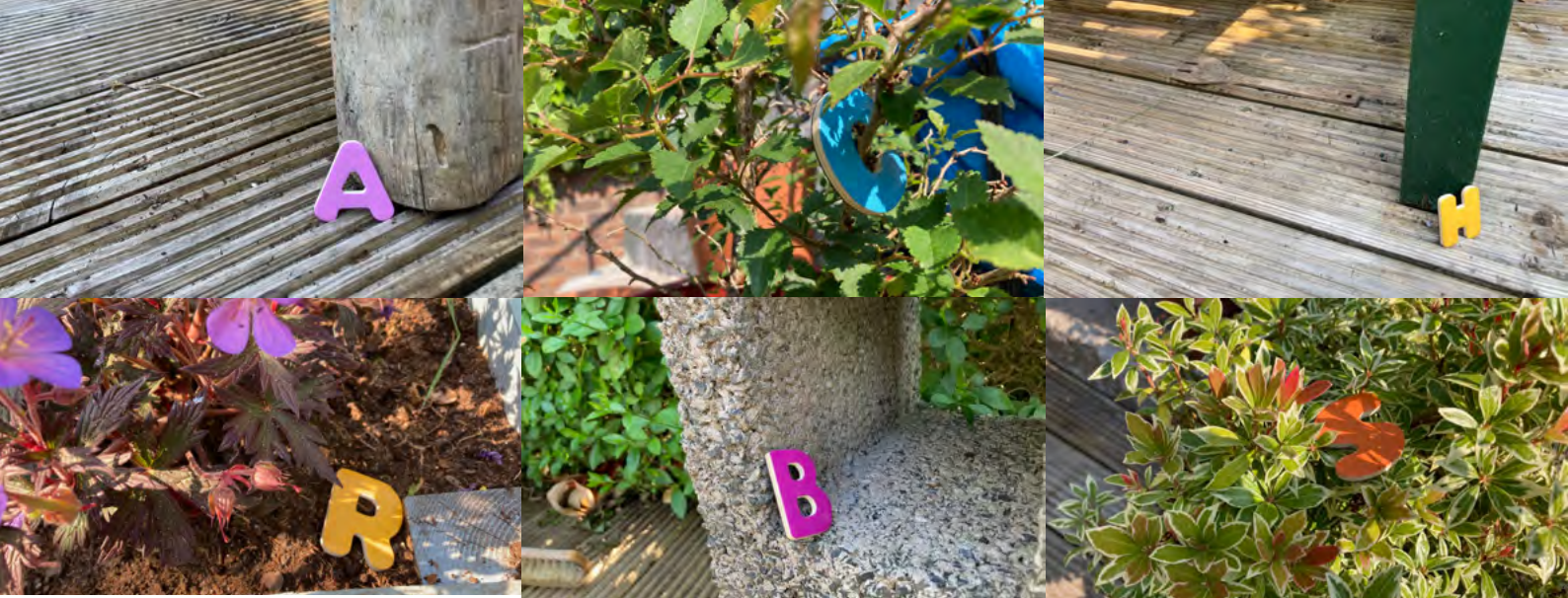


Sock Bubbles



For this activity, you need a plastic bottle with the bottom cut off, some washing up liquid, food colouring and a sock. Wrap the sock around the bottle and secure with an elastic band or sticky tape if needs be. Mix approx. 2 tablespoons of washing up liquid in a small bowl with enough water to cover some of the sock, swirl it around a bit to make it bubbly. Drop a couple of drops of food colouring on the end of the sock, and then blow into the mouth of the bottle to see what happens. You may find a little more washing up liquid helps keep mixing the water to make sure it stays bubbly before dipping the sock in it.





Garden ABC

If you have any letters in your service, hide these about an outdoor area like a garden and ask the children to go and find them. Depending on the child, you could then ask them to name some things that begin with that letter, these could be items back in the premises. Alternatively, if you hide specific letters that make up a word, see if they can collect them all, and then arrange them into the word you have chosen.

Water-balloon Games

Challenge children with maths questions where the answer is throwing a water balloon with the correct number on it at the correct target. You can make this easier or harder depending on the child by increasing or decreasing the difficulty of the maths questions. You can also write different words on the balloons and ask them to hit the right target for verbs, adjectives, and nouns.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



With the summer holidays just around the corner, we hope you enjoy the break, or if you are running a holiday service, we wish you all the best for this.



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