

# Commissioner for Children and Young People launches A RIGHT wee blether



Nursery workers, parents and carers across Edinburgh are giving very young children the chance to inform the work of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Billed as a creative 'conversation' with very young children, next month sees Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, launch *A RIGHT wee blether* (ARWB) Scotland-wide.

Running from 12 September – 31 October 2011 and involving parents, carers and early years workers, the programme builds on the Commissioner's 2010 national consultation which saw 74,000 school-age children and young people taking part in a national vote.

Now [A RIGHT wee blether](#) aims to give very young children aged 2-5 the opportunity to inform the Commissioner's work and to encourage their participation in expressing their ideas and thoughts.

Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People explained that his remit includes raising awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – and this includes working with the very youngest children.

ARWB is specifically designed to address Article 12 (child's right to express their views) which states that the child is able to form views from the youngest age, even when they may

be unable to express them verbally.

The Commissioner said *“A RIGHT wee blether will allow the very youngest children across Scotland to express their thoughts and ideas. The project involves an adult spending some dedicated time with a child to explore and answer five questions. This can be done in as many creative and playful ways and children can respond in whatever way suits them.”*

*A RIGHT wee blether* poses five questions

- How are you feeling today?
- What makes you smile?
- Who is special to you?
- You are given a special star, where would you put it?
- What would you like to change?

The outputs of ARWB will be collated and will help inform the Commissioner’s work.

Bernadette Macpherson, Head of Centre at Paisley Pre Five Centre – and a member of A Right Wee Blether’s Steering Group said:

*“Even very young children have opinions, views, likes and dislikes. Central to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the principle of listening to children and encouraging them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. A RIGHT wee blether creates a space for parents and child care professionals to do that – to have a conversation and encourage their active engagement and involvement. It is also a chance for the thoughts of very young children to help inform the work Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People, over the next four years.”*

Margaret Williams who has been a childminder for more than 20 years in Rothesay, piloted the *RIGHT wee blether* with three of her charges, Megan aged 3, Liam, aged 4 and Ronnie, aged 5. *I wanted to an activity we could work on over several days and*

*decided we would make a short film. The children loved the idea and started by making really colourful masks so that we could hide their faces but still have them take part using film. I tried hard not to influence the children when asking the questions, but when you give children the chance they do come up with their own ideas. After all, hearing their thoughts is what this is all about. It was a great activity for the children to all work on together but at their own pace. We talked about it a lot afterwards. I think doing a RIGHT wee blether a great way for a childminder to understand, appreciate and encourage the children they look after."*

Every child who takes part will receive a beautifully illustrated [Wee Book About Me](#) where they can record their involvement in a *RIGHT wee blether*. Meanwhile, adults receive [Our Wee Story](#) book, where they can record more detail about the conversations that took place.

Illustrations for the project are being supplied by award winning children's book illustrator and author Ross Collins.