

## \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*



### **MASSIVE EXPANSION OF TRAINING TO SUPPORT THE FAST GROWING NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL PLAYWORKERS NEEDED IN THE SECTOR**

- 100,000 playworkers needed over next five years
- Few colleges provide playwork training
- OFSTED inspectors concerned to meet the Daycare Standards

Professionals in Play, a national conference to be held at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Victoria, London on Wednesday 15 October 2003 will consider how these challenges can be met.

The conference, organised by the SkillsActive Playwork Unit, will look at the playwork profession and how government and key organisations are developing approaches to support playworkers and improve training and qualification opportunities. Margaret Hodge, the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families will introduce the new Green Paper *Every Child Matters* and talk about the Government's hopes for future workforce reform.

The conference will start with contributions from Steve Besley the Policy Officer from Edexcel Awarding Body looking at the policy context for the development of skills over the next few years and Sue Palmer, Leeds Metropolitan University closely involved in the development of sector endorsed Foundation Degrees will tell us about developments so far for Playwork.

There are a wide variety of workshops to choose from. Themes at the conference include:

- New and pioneering approaches to adult learning

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- Ideas and ways to increase the number of colleges and training agencies that provide playwork training and qualifications
- Contributions that explore ways to involve children in the development of playwork training
- Different ways to improve the level of funding for playwork education and training.

The task of qualifying the workforce is huge, and this dramatic growth offers significant employment opportunities for thousands of people. However, the lack of training courses, funding and infrastructure available means that robust strategies are needed to enable the workforce to expand to its required size.

Paul Bonel, Director of the Playwork Unit, explains, “There is a growing recognition of the importance of play in a child’s development. Similarly, in our modern age, the role of adults is increasingly important in providing opportunities to play. The training and qualifications of these playworkers is central to ensuring that there is real quality playwork as a result. For the first time, with Government backing, we have the opportunity to build a national framework of qualifications and training appropriate and accessible to this important, newly emerging profession.”

The conference will close with a formal announcement about the progress of the Sector Skills Council submission from the Chair, Douglas Forman and a toast to the launch of SkillsActive.

**For further information please contact Paul Bonel Director of the SkillsActive Playwork Unit, telephone 020 7388 7755 ext. 206 or email**

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### Notes

1. The conference will be held at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Victoria, London on 21 October. Places are available from Doug at the Playwork Unit, SkillsActive, 24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD. Telephone 020 7388 7755 Ext 207
2. SkillsActive is the new Sector Skills Council covering Sport and Recreation, Playwork, the Outdoors, Health and Fitness and the Caravan industry.
3. Skillsactive's mission statement is *"To ensure best quality, best business and best value within the Sector through improvement of personal and corporate skills thereby enabling the Sector to achieve its economic and social potential."*
4. SkillsActive has a dedicated Playwork Unit taking forward the development of education, training and qualifications in playwork. The Playwork Unit is engaged in a strategic work programme that is setting standards and improving the infrastructure and delivery of a whole range of training opportunities for people who work with children in their leisure time. The National Network of Playwork Education and Training has been set up to support all playworkers in accessing the vital skills needed to work with children and young people.
5. SSCs are employer led organisations that aim to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK. SSCs provide employers with the opportunity to provide leadership to meet their sector's skills and business needs. In return they receive substantial public investment and greater dialogue with government departments across the UK.

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