

Press Release:
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For immediate use



*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Enterprise in Play Conference

SkillsActive is celebrating its first anniversary as a Sector Skills Council and showcasing innovation and enterprise in playwork.

The Enterprise in Play conference at the Royal Horticultural Halls in Victoria on Wednesday October 13th 2004 is the 2nd Annual conference on play and playwork organised by SkillsActive, the new sector skills council for active leisure and learning.

Equality in Play and Enterprise, an ESF funded development programme led by the University of Gloucestershire has provided support for 12 SkillsActive projects at regional and national level. These projects, alongside others in the EQUIPE partnership, have developed new initiatives in Playwork education and training and contributed to the improvement of jobs in the children's sector.

As well as EQUIPE, the conference will be featuring new ideas and thinking on children, play and playwork. Jeanette Pugh, Director of the Children's Workforce Unit at the DfES, will be speaking about the aspirations of government following the publication of Every child matters: next steps and the development of the Children Bill.

In the afternoon Perry Else, Activity Sheffield will be taking a playful gallop through some of the new concepts that describe the play process and Marguerite Hunter-Blair, Playboard, Northern Ireland will be presenting her thoughts on best practice in consulting with children and young people.

This is very exciting time for the Playwork sector. The Children Bill making its way through parliament includes opportunities for recreation and play as a key requirement for the health and well-being of children and young people. Never before has there been so much interest and in and importance attached to children's play. In a recent study by University College London, Playing came out well ahead of other structured and non-structured activities as using more energy and benefiting a healthy life style in children.

Stephen Studd, Chief Executive of SkillsActive said: "Playwork remains at the forefront of the SkillsActive agenda. We are taking forward the need for positive play and recreational opportunities for all children and young people supported by a programme of research and development to up-skill the workforce."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and the Caravan industries.
2. SkillsActive is responsible for developing National Occupational Standards for the Fitness Industry. The National Occupational Standards are vital for the development of the industry and the recognition of the achievements of those who work in it. The Standards define the knowledge and skills needed to work in the industry and define best practice.
3. SkillsActive's mission statement is: "To ensure best quality, best business and best value within the Sector to achieve its economic and social potential."
4. 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.
5. For more information about SkillsActive, please visit our website @ www.skillsactive.com