

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 22nd APRIL 2002

REPORT ON: CHILDCARE SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS – SCOTTISH PRE-SCHOOL PLAY ASSOCIATION AND DUNDEE SITTER SERVICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 268-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This Report seeks approval for the provision of childcare funding to maintain the existing level of support from the Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA) and the Dundee Sitter Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee note the contents of this Report and approve the provision of funding to the SPPA of £20,195 and to the Dundee Sitter Service of £40,000.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The full cost of this proposal will be £60,195 in the financial year 2002/2003. Funding will come from childcare and pre-school development funding made available to Local Authorities by the Scottish Executive.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These proposals will enrich and enhance the learning and development of young children in Dundee and will enable everyone to play a full part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These proposals will contribute towards ensuring that children and their families are effectively supported through childhood, enabling them to make best advantage of future opportunities. The proposals will also further support partnership and collaboration with the voluntary sector in Dundee.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive has made funding available to Local Authorities to support the development of childcare and pre-school education services to promote the development of childcare, early years services and family support services.
- 6.2 The Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership was established in December 1999 to support the development of services across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- 6.3 The Dundee Early Years and Childcare Plan 2001 - 2004, highlights the significant role made by the voluntary sector to family support and childcare services.

6.4 The SPPA is a national organisation providing support and developmental assistance to under-fives groups and organisations including Parent & Toddler Groups, Playgroups, Private Nurseries and Crèches in Dundee City.

6.5 The Dundee Sitter Service provides a unique service to parents, especially those who require home- based childcare at times of the day when no other services are available.

7.0 CURRENT SITUATION

7.1 There are currently a total of 43 member groups of SPPA in Dundee. Member groups are managed by voluntary parent led committees and are reliant upon external supports to maintain quality services to young children and their families. The City Council has made funding available to enable the SPPA to appoint and manage a Development Worker (30 hours per week) to provide this level of support. Whilst managed by the SPPA Area Manager the Development Worker reports regularly to the Early Years and Childcare Team to enable an integrated approach to the provision of support to groups and progressing developments towards the targets within the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Plan 2001 – 2004.

7.2 The provision of support and development from SPPA has contributed significantly to raising quality across all groups through regular visits by the Development Worker providing general advice and guidance, training input where required / requested, building up networks and representing groups upon the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership. Specifically during the period August 2001 to March 2002, a high proportion of support has been directed at 4 playgroups located within areas of high demand for funded part-time pre-school nursery provision to enable these groups to fulfil the requirements of Partner Providers of Pre-School Education.

7.3 Dundee Sitter Service has been operating for 3 years. 207 families have registered to use the service and 137 have been allocated a sitter.

7.4 Currently service users are split into 3 categories, those needing childcare to support employment, those in training or education and those requiring respite. In the last financial year an additional 14 children received a service. In addition staff at the Sitter Service have benefited from the programme of training offered by the Early Years and Childcare Team.

8.0 PROPOSAL

8.1 The proposal is to provide funding to SPPA and the Sitter Service to maintain the current levels of service being provided.

8.2 The SPPA proposal includes the continued funding of a Development Worker whose remit will be outlined in a service level agreement and detailed action plan between the Early Years and Childcare Team and SPPA, addressing key targets within the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Plan 2001-2004. The Development worker will continue to report regularly to the Early Years and Childcare Team.

8.3 Specifically the Development Worker will actively engage with member groups through regular visits, provide advice and assistance including training as requested or required, promote quality provision (including providing support to groups to enable them to achieve the SPPA Quality Assurance Scheme Award), represent groups through the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership, promote networking and partnership working, assist in the maintenance of quality information for the Dundee Childcare Information Service and seek to increase the membership base of SPPA.

- 8.4 Strong links are established between the Early Years Team and the Sitter Service. The Service also has a Service Level agreement with the Social Work Department who also provide support to this organisation.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Directors of Finance, Social Work and Support Services.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

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Director of Education

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Date