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14 December 2022

Dear Sue,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November 2022. I was grateful to receive further information about Upstart Scotland's campaign and your work on the school starting age.

As I have previously outlined, I am committed to ensuring that play-based, child-centred and outdoor approaches to learning are effectively delivered across the early level curriculum. The "Realising the Ambition: Being Me" early years practice guidance was published in 2020, just before the pandemic. Our focus is now on ensuring that the guidance is effectively and consistently implemented. Education Scotland is taking forward a range of activity nationally and locally to support teachers and practitioners in this important area.

I also mentioned in my previous letter that we have legislated to ensure that, from August 2023, all children who defer their school entry are automatically entitled to an additional year of funded ELC. This is a significant step forward in allowing families to make decisions about school start for their children without the financial barrier of ELC costs.

It is important that we see through this important work and understand the impact of these changes before we could consider any major structural reforms. Our priority for this Parliamentary term has to be fulfilling the commitments on which this Government was elected, which includes important plans to build a system of school age childcare.

I would be happy to meet you in the New Year to discuss these issues more fully. Please contact my official Will Corner (william.corner@gov.scot) to make meeting arrangements. In the meantime, thank you again for your further letter.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



Yours sincerely

Clare Haughey

CLARE HAUGHEY

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