Dear

On Thursday 13th June 2024, immediately after First Minister’s Question Time there will be a [Members’ Debate](https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12369) tabled by Fulton MacGregor MSP on ‘Fostering a Discussion on a Kindergarten Stage in Scotland’. As one of your constituents, I urge you to support it.

There is now a huge body of evidence about early child development which supports a relationship-centred, play-based pedagogical approach (as often as possible outdoors) until children are six – or preferably – seven years old. By providing a sound foundation for allchildren’s lifelong wellbeing it would address many of the problems currently confronting the Scottish educational system:

* The **poverty-related attainment gap** begins as a developmental gapso a longer period of support for overall development would be of huge benefit for children from less advantaged backgrounds
* Many **additional support needs** (which now affect over a third of Scottish children) are developmental in origin and could be ameliorated an extended period of relationship-centred play-based practice
* A high-quality kindergarten stage develops children’s self-regulation skills, self-confidence and emotional resilience, all of which are vital for long-term **mental health and attitude to education** as time goes on.

Scotland’s extraordinarily early school starting age has always placed some children at an educational disadvantage but, due to massive cultural changes over recent decades, all young children are now missing out on the active, social, outdoor play which is essential for long term health and wellbeing.

You can find more information about the benefits of a kindergarten stage on [www.upstart.scot](http://www.upstart.scot).

Yours sincerely,