

Wales Pre-school Playgroup Association

3 July 2007

Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, based in Newtown, celebrates 20 years as an independent charity in 2007. In June the association's director, Thomas Memery, described how the organisation has developed:

"Playgroups were first formed in the early 1960's by parents who wished to provide shared play for their children. In 1961, Belle Tutaev wrote a letter to the Guardian about how she had set up a playgroup for her own child and offered advice and help to anyone wishing to do the same thing.



From this one letter the playgroup movement snowballed from 1 child in 1961 to approximately 390,000 in 1976 and on the 16th July 1962 the Pre-school Playgroups Association (PPA) was formed in London.

At that time, playgroups in Wales were part of the PPA, but there was no formal structure within Wales to bind these groups together.

In 1973, the PPA was awarded a grant by the Welsh Office to appoint an all Wales National Adviser (the Director), a part time secretary and 3 part-time Development Officers (Regional Executive Officers).

The first office in Wales was opened in Newport, south Wales and in 1976 the grant from the Welsh Office was £18,000.

In April 1987, in response to the growth and development of PPA in Wales, members agreed that Wales PPA should become an independent Association, and on the 4th July 1987 Wales PPA held its Inaugural Meeting in Aberystwyth.

Today Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association represents over 1000 independent member groups who work with over 29,000 pre-school children in Wales delivering affordable quality child care and education.



The community based, family focused and totally open approach adopted by the Association is central to our ethos. Our responsive regional teams are very much part of the communities they serve.

By supporting a broad range of quality pre-school provision including wholly independent charities, vibrant community groups, maintained sector settings and successful private businesses, we ensure that we can always embrace and respect the individual needs of parents and their children.

With our ongoing support, pre-school children benefit enormously from the first class care and balanced early years education delivered throughout Wales by our members.

The Association moved to Ladywell House Newtown back in March 1999. Most Board meetings and several national meetings are regularly held in Newtown.

The charity is proud of its links with Newtown; however making the initial decision to completely relocate the main base for the charity was both difficult and daunting.

Rebuilding an experienced team from a small local population was a challenge and in the early days, the charity benefited from the ICT infrastructure provided by the Welsh Development Agency.

Experienced key staff members worked hard to create a strong team to support an expanding Association and the charity prides itself on having a staff capable of delivering first class customer services to members and volunteers and regional teams who engage directly with the community.

The charity, led by enthusiastic volunteers currently employs 120 staff and generates revenue of approximately £1.7m.

Voluntary County Committees made up of local activists, supported by Regional Managers, steer the important work of the Association throughout Wales and provide a solid decision making framework upon which the Association can rely.

Staff and volunteers are charged with promoting the interests of Wales PPA members, and promoting the activities in which the Association is involved including; training, the provision of a robust Quality Assured scheme, the production and distribution of publications, and delivery of information and support to member groups.

The best way for parents, families and organisations to engage with our important work is to join the Association as a member.

There are, however, many other ways you can support our work, you can: subscribe to our popular magazine Small Talk, sponsor a child to attend a playgroup in your area, or donate unwanted stock, materials or equipment to be used by local children."

Pre-school Learning Alliance, UK

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance is one of the largest voluntary sector provider of quality affordable childcare and education in England.
- Through direct provision and its membership of 15,000 nurseries, sessional pre-schools and parent and toddler groups, the Alliance supports over 800,000 children and their families in England. The Alliance also develops and runs family learning programmes, offers information and advice, runs acclaimed training and accreditation programmes and campaigns to influence early years policy and practice.
- For information about the Pre-school Learning Alliance, visit the website: www.pre-school.org.uk

NEWS RELEASE

15 January 2008

New resources from the Pre-school Learning Alliance help parents support children at the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Pre-school Learning Alliance has published a series of books to help parents support children following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the play-based curriculum being introduced to all early years settings by September 2008.

Grouped under the umbrella title *First and Foremost*, the series comprises six books packed with a wealth of ideas for applying the key themes and principles of the EYFS to everyday life and so enriching a child's learning and development in early years settings. With each book containing a chapter on theory and research, the *First and Foremost* series is an ideal resource for parents, grandparents, practitioners and childcare students alike.