



# STARCATCHERS

## Inspiration, Wonder and New Ideas

Professional Development for Early Learning and Childcare



**Creative, responsive adults are the most important resource our young children need.**

# Welcome

I've had the pleasure of working with Scotland's early years workforce for over six years now, and three themes keep emerging:

- We are all born creative, but we don't always feel it
- We know the expressive arts can be powerful tools for learning, but we don't always know what that looks like within modern, child-led approaches
- Creativity feels deeply personal, but it's a set of skills that can be developed through the right opportunities and support.



Starcatchers' training has been created especially for the early years workforce, recognising that whatever the setting, creative, responsive adults are the most important resource young children need.

At Starcatchers we recognise that fun and a sense of wonder are two of the most powerful tools for engaging and inspiring learners of all ages. Our training will support you to carry that ethos through into your own practice.

Our artists share practical, open-ended approaches to the expressive arts that give babies and young children genuine opportunities to express themselves and drive the creative process.

Our theory-based workshops cut through the jargon and complex theories, using real life examples of excellent practice to make sense of policies, guidance documents and research.

Scotland needs an early years workforce as creative, imaginative and engaged as the babies and young children we work with – let's make 2020 the year that happens.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Heather'.

**Heather Armstrong, Creative Skills Manager**

## About Starcatchers

Starcatchers is Scotland's National Arts and Early Years Organisation specialising in creating performances and exploring creative activity for babies, toddlers and young children aged 0-5 and the adults who care for them.

We make beautiful, innovative productions; deliver community engagement projects; and provide professional development for artists, early years practitioners, educators and others who work with children to help ensure the expressive arts are at the heart of practice.

Creative Skills has been delivered as a Scottish Government-funded programme in some local authority areas since 2013. Our bespoke, commissioned training is delivered in a range of settings across Scotland.

# Professional Development for Early Learning and Childcare

The training our artists deliver will inspire and energise early years professionals to harness the transformational power of the arts.

Participants will develop the skills and confidence to put the expressive arts at the heart of practice and offer genuinely creative experiences for young children that:

- Inspire feelings of wonder and fun, supporting relationships and learning
- Deepen engagement across ages and stages
- Help develop a sense of agency
- Support meaningful decision-making.

Our team of professional artists have expertise across artforms, including music; drama; puppetry; visual art; storytelling; and creative movement.

All are experienced working with early years professionals and understand the Scottish early years context.

We offer:

- **In-service days** – combine theory and practical sessions to design a bespoke day of training that meets the needs of your staff
- **Half day, full day or twilight formats** – choose the method of delivery that works for you
- **Bespoke training programmes** – working in a holistic way to help staff embed the arts and creativity across every aspect of service delivery
- **Practical workshops and break-out sessions** – for conferences and other events across early years, education, play and health.

Our commissioned training can be tailored to meet the needs of individual settings, made up of the following elements:

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## Creative Approaches to Expressive Arts for 0-5s

This introductory session focuses on how creativity is central to every child's healthy development and how the expressive arts are a vehicle for nurturing and developing this innate capacity to help every child meet their full potential.

This interactive theory workshop focuses on:

- Understanding the distinction between creativity and the expressive arts
- Why creative, open approaches to the expressive arts are powerful learning tools in early years
- How expressive arts can support the delivery of key policies including early level Curriculum for Excellence and Pre-Birth to Three
- The role of the adult inspiring creative, expressive arts experiences within child-led approaches.



## Expressive Arts and The Voice of 0-5s

Children's rights begin from the moment they are born, not just when they are able to understand rights as an abstract concept.

This interactive theory workshop focuses on:

- How babies and young children experience and learn about their rights
- How the expressive arts can be used with babies and young children to develop their sense of agency
- What meaningful decision-making looks like within an early years context
- How the expressive arts can support delivery of UNCRC and key early years policies.

**Contact Starcatchers on 0131 2902560  
or email [info@starcatchers.org.uk](mailto:info@starcatchers.org.uk)**



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## Playing with Sound

Exposure to music from early childhood is associated with so many positive developmental outcomes, including improved social, emotional and speech and language skills.

This session focuses on building confidence by recognising the musicality in all of us and exploring how to be inventive and adventurous with sound to incorporate music into your setting day-to-day, including storytelling and free play, indoors and outdoors:

- Using your voice – confidence and pitch
- Using your body – no instruments required
- Making sound with everyday surfaces and objects
- Textured sound – enabling children to see and feel music
- Using music in storytelling and play.

***“Lots of people think of themselves as unmusical. I’d like to challenge that. Everyone is musical. Young children embrace their musicality and in this session I will help you to embrace yours.”***

Greg Sinclair – Artist/Trainer

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## Drama and Imaginative Play

Weaving fictional characters and scenarios into your setting expands physical space – in the world of make-believe possibilities are infinite.

This session will give you the confidence and skills to use drama and improvisation to extend children’s own enquiries, bring storytelling to life, overcome communication barriers and help children deal with difficult emotions or situations.

The session focuses on:

- Creative space-making - finding inspiration in the familiar
- How young children engage in dramatic play
- Responding to the child’s lead and providing stimulus that will help them develop their own ideas and creativity
- Using voice, facial expression and body language to bring characters to life
- Introducing fictional characters and scenarios to overcome communication barriers and to help children understand and deal with difficult emotions or situations.



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## Puppetry

Creating and telling stories through puppets enables children to explore scenarios and feelings in a fun, safe and creative way.

You will learn how to breathe life into puppets using simple strategies. Communication through puppetry is a technique which removes some of the pressure that direct communication with a young child brings particularly if a child is shy, worried or struggling to express their feelings.

In this practical session you will develop the skills and confidence to:

- Create puppets using everyday objects
- Bring puppets to life
- Use puppets in performance, storytelling and play
- Explore different styles of puppetry and their applications
- Explore how puppets can be used to overcome individual communication difficulties.

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## Visual art

We want to break down the concept that you need to be good at drawing to create visual art. Visual art is about exploration and self-expression, offering exciting opportunities for even the very youngest children to tell their own story, create something wonderful and develop a range of skills.

Develop your own confidence in creating visual art, take a practical approach to incorporating techniques such as drawing, painting, collage, 3D and print into your setting day-to-day and explore the opportunities this can offer children.

This session will focus on:

- Developing confidence through explorative drawing – look at the world in a different way, notice new things and explore different perspectives
- Creating tools for visual art – beyond pencils, paint and paper
- Mark-making – exploring children’s visual languages
- Incorporating visual art into storytelling
- Valuing the process of creating art and encouraging exploration
- Developing a strategy for recording and presenting children’s everyday visual art creations to enhance engagement.

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## Multi-sensory storytelling (0-3)

Stories are an integral part of childhood development. Babies and young children 0-3 will engage with the musicality of your voice, eye contact and visuals during storytelling but there are many techniques that you can use to enrich stories for this age group.

This session focuses on how to create a multi-sensory storytelling experience for babies and children 0-3, and for children who are non-verbal, using:

- Tactile objects
- Smell
- Light
- Music and song
- Rhythm and rhyme.

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## Storytelling (3-5)

Storytelling doesn't have to involve the story corner or even a book. Stories are an integral part of child development and played out every day through children's free play.

This session focuses on recognising how stories develop through children's play, how you can provide opportunities that help children develop these stories to extend their enquiries, and how to engage children through your own bold and exciting storytelling:

- Stories as an integral part of childhood development
- Collaborative storytelling – improvising stories with young children taking the lead
- Bringing a story to life – using your voice (tone, pitch and volume) and body, visual stimulus and other props.



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## Creative Movement

Being able to recognise early movement patterns in babies and establishing an awareness of how these evolve as a child grows, is crucial for creating the space and opportunity required for healthy neurological and physical development.

Having the confidence to actively join with and support young children's play through movement expands the potential range of their creative engagement.

This session will focus on:

- Developmental movement patterns in young children 0-5 – from birth to walking
- How to create spaces and opportunities to encourage developmentally-appropriate creative movement, including:
  - Movement games in children's play
  - Using props to encourage creative movement
  - How Schema patterns inspire creative movement
  - Massage and appropriate touch
- Creative movement for children with additional support needs – understanding a child's physical journey from birth and how curiosity stimulates active participation for children with a range of needs.

***“[The creative movement artist] had us all on the floor, shoes off, mimicking those first developmental movements a baby would make. It was truly an awakening experience. Being down at the child's level, understanding the way they move, what they see... it was just the beginning of what's been a hugely exciting experience so far.”***

Participant, Creative Skills – Creative Movement

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## Engaging parents

Hosting a creative day in your setting for the children and their parents or carers creates an open and welcoming space that can help improve parental engagement over the longer-term.

Facilitated by an artist, parents will learn about their vital role that creativity plays in a child's development.

They will be encouraged to explore their own creativity, take risks, and use this to try out new ideas and activities with their child.

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## Inspiring Creativity for Managers

We are all born creative, but we don't always feel creative. This training is packed with lots of exercises and ideas you can share with your team to begin developing their creative practice.

This interactive workshop focuses on:

- Quick, practical exercises which can be used in team meetings
- Easy ways to explain why creativity plays a key role in cognitive and social development
- How can we make this MORE creative? - little changes that make big differences
- The importance of storytelling in changing attitudes
- The power of the expressive arts in engaging parents and carers.



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## Prices

Prices start from only:

- £450 per half day
- £650 per full day

Max 30 participants for practical sessions

Find out more, please contact [info@starcatchers.org.uk](mailto:info@starcatchers.org.uk)

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# Professional Development for Early Learning and Childcare

To find out more about how Starcatchers' commissioned training can benefit the staff and children in your setting, or to request more details about the cost of this training, please contact us by phone or email.

We will be happy to discuss your needs and answer any questions.

Email: [info@starcatchers.org.uk](mailto:info@starcatchers.org.uk)

Telephone: 0131 2902560

Heather Armstrong

Creative Skills Manager, Starcatchers.

