



The Children's Media FOUNDATION

“Drawn Together” – a Children's Arts and Culture Summit

The CMF-supported All Party Parliamentary Group for Children's Media and the Arts took part in the DRAWN TOGETHER Summit in the House of Commons on 11th October. Bringing together a number of all party parliamentary groups with a particular interest and remit in the Arts and/or education, the event was a chance to meet and learn more about each other with a view to combining knowledge and experience to further promote the Arts both in formal education and in life long learning.

The CMF was pleased to support the event, inviting key guests and speakers including a number of our patrons, children's arts specialists from the BBC and independent production community and Children's Laureate Chris Riddell.

Below is the transcript of CMF board member Jayne Kirkham's speech, given on behalf of the APPG for Children's Media and the Arts.

APPG Children's Media and the Arts

Speech by Jayne Kirkham 11.10.16, The Atlee Suite, Portcullis House

The APPG for Children's Media and the Arts grew out of the 2010 election when it became abundantly clear that the political world of all persuasions prefers to put things in pigeon holes.

'Ah kids' said CMS, "talk to Education". "Ah kids," said Education. "Talk to BIS". "Ah kids," said BIS. "Talk to..." – you get the picture.

And while the grown ups were going round and round in circles, yet another generation of children had grown up with unresolved internet safety and literacy issues, literacy issues in general, and an ever declining access to theatre and cinema made specially for them and an increasing television equivalent of a diet of fast food and fries, gone large.

The mission statement in the Register of APPGs rather loftily states the aim is 'to provide greater awareness of the issues around children's media and arts by bringing together the interests of both audience and industry within a wider cultural, social and educational context to promote first class art and media for children'.

Or to put it another way, we're gonna join the dots: show the different political departments that you can't pigeonhole children's arts and media into CMS, or Education or even BIS.

Their education is not confined to school hours, their play not confined to after school. Oh you know all this. It just seemed like the people who make the decisions didn't.

The group is small but active: contributing much to the campaign for a children's television tax incentive (a pragmatic approach to ensuring children are not overwhelmed by cheap, culturally irrelevant content); to Internet safety and security by commissioning a report for the Office of Fair Trading's inquiry into In-APP purchases and screening Baroness Kidron's hard hitting documentary about teenagers online; highlighting the inequalities in public funding for children's arts and the value of music education with, amongst other things, the distribution of the BBC's Ten Pieces DVD to over 100 MPS and Peers.

The issues we deal with are often complex and there are no short term fixes although there are plenty of knee jerk reactions both in the public and in parliament.

Thanks to the support of the Children's Media Foundation (who volunteer as secretariat) and Action For Children's Arts, we have access to key professionals (both industry practitioners and academic researchers), which means we can give our members the latest thinking and experience so that they can make informed decisions.

Currently, well the EBACC goes on, the BBC charter renewal process goes on, the funding issues of both media and arts goes on...

In her speech at last week's Conservative Party Conference, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport said, "Being part of an orchestra, or dance group or a netball squad teaches us to have discipline, teaches us to work as a team, teaches us to respect others. More than that, they exercise our minds and lift our hearts. I want young people everywhere in the UK, no matter what their background to have the chance to do these things." –

Sounds like she's joined the dots! But hang on...

How does that fit in with the Department of Education's EBACC? Which is already having an impact with fewer children attending arts events both inside and outside of school, which in turn is destroying the livelihood of specialists, which means there are and will be fewer opportunities in the future...

And how does that fit in with the creative industries skills shortage? And more importantly for us, young people's disengagement with their own society?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the child states that every child has the right to enjoy and participate in cultural and artistic activities, be given news and information appropriately and educated so that their personality, talents and abilities are developed to the full.

This is why we need to join the dots.

And it's why we are very excited by this event today because it gives us the opportunity to join more of the dots, and find ways to campaign more effectively.

Thank you.