



The Early Years Health Promotion Project Summary of Evaluations



Outdoor Play (Leitrim Service)



Excursion to Hazelwood (Sligo)



Gardening (Leitrim Service)



Gardening (Sligo Service)

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Introduction:

The Early Years Health Promotion Project is a collaborative initiative between Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committees and the HSE West. The project aims to support childcare providers in developing and implementing policies for healthy eating, and for physical indoor & outdoor activity within pre-school services in Sligo & Leitrim. The project is funded by the Health Service Executive West, and is managed by Leitrim and Sligo County Childcare Committees.

The project objectives are:

1. To support the participating childcare providers in counties Sligo and Leitrim with the development and implementation of healthy eating policies based on the National Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-Schools (2004)
2. To support the participating childcare providers in counties Sligo and Leitrim with the development and implementation of physical activity policies and programmes and quality outdoor play
3. To promote the benefits of good nutrition and physical activity, oral health and sun safety to parents, children, childcare professionals and others involved in the provision of childcare services, improve the quality of service provision by producing policy models.

Why the project was developed:

The need for the Early Years Health Promotion Project was highlighted in The National Health Strategy 'Quality and Fairness' (2001) which emphasis's the importance of promoting health and well-being and recommends that initiatives to promote child health be undertaken.

Considerable evidence exists to emphasize the important contribution that healthy eating and physical activity make to child development, as well as to the value of integrating the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity into the pre-school childcare setting. The early years are critically important for the formation of good habits and a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle. The pre-school setting provides an excellent forum for the promotion of positive habits and attitudes to healthy eating and being active as

part of a healthy lifestyle. Early food experiences have an important effect on eating patterns in adult life and childhood diet may increase the risk of chronic disease. It follows that inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. Levels of obesity are increasing among Irish children and a preventative project targeted at the preschool setting contributes to reducing and preventing further increases in obesity levels. As a result of these concerns and following the publication of the National Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-Schools in 2004, a partnership project was established between the HSE and Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committees.

How it all began:

A steering committee was set up to oversee the project which included expertise from all areas including community dietetics, community worker within the HSE, physical activity Co-ordinators, Local Sports Partnership, County Childcare Committee Managers and representatives from the childcare sector.

The project started off as a pilot project in 2005. Expressions of Interest forms were sent out to all services in Leitrim and Sligo. A list of criteria was compiled which the groups had to meet in order to be placed on the project. Some of these criteria included:

- The geographical area in which the service was based
- If the service was full day care or sessional?
- If food was served by the service or was brought in from home?

From this, there were 10 services in Leitrim and 10 services in Sligo chosen for the project.

There are now a total of 31 services being supported by the Early Years Health Promotion Project, 15 in Leitrim and 16 in Sligo. They include private childcare services, child minders, community childcare services, a community full day care service for Traveller children and a community based after school for children with special needs. There are currently 70 staff, 774 children and 700 families benefiting from the work of the Early Years Health Promotion Project.

The Work of The Early Years Health Promotion Project:

There are 2 part-time project workers employed to deliver the project, one based in Sligo and the other based in Leitrim.

The programme consists of a three stage plan:

Stage 1:

- Support service in devising Healthy Eating Policy.
- Support service in devising Physical Activity & Outdoor Play Policy.
- Staff to receive training in Action Kids or Buntus Start.
- Support in implementing policies through working with staff and children e.g. food tasting sessions, play sessions and outdoor activities. (Food provided by Project Worker)
- Support visits every 4-6 weeks.
- Hold information sessions for parents on Healthy Eating policy and provide with information pack to take home.

Stage 2:

- Staff to receive training in FETAC Level 5 Lifestyle Planning.
- Service should be implementing policies themselves through regular physical activity and introducing new foods monthly. (Food provided by service)
- Sticker charts and rewards for trying new foods during the day and at home.
- Gardening projects for children should be started.
- Support visits every 8 weeks.
- Introduction of Pre-School Workbook.
- New staff to attend training and existing staff to attend refresher training for Action Kids or Buntus Start
- Encourage staff, parents and children to attend events, for example a cookery demonstration

Stage 3:

- Implementation of the FETAC Lifestyle Planning (if applicable)
- Introduce Oral Health and Sun Safety and devise policies in relation to these.
- Implement the policies and link in with parents.
- Work with other groups within service e.g. baby room, after school, wobblers.
- Promote outdoor play for under 2's and babies.
- Provide information to parents on weaning, first foods and play.

Onsite support visits

Each service receives on site support visits every 4 – 8 weeks depending on what stage the service is at on the project. This ensures that staff receive on site support and it allows the project worker to build a rapport with the children in the service. These visits also support the staff to devise and implement healthy eating, physical activity and outdoor play policies.

Play sessions

Project worker facilitates play and physical activity sessions to encourage and motivate the staff to implement physical activity. The project worker revisits to ensure the staff and children are getting the most from the activity. Links are made with parents to ensure physical activity and outdoor play is encouraged at home.

Food-tasting activities

This activity is to introduce children to foods that they may have not tried before. Children are more likely to try new foods when with their peers. Children enjoy this as they have the freedom to choose the foods they want. Some of the foods children have tried are fruit smoothies, carrot, celery, pepper with hummus dip, and tortilla wraps with fillings of their choice.

Oral Health Promotion

These visits were introduced in 2008 after the FETAC Level 5 Lifestyle Planning course was completed. In conjunction with the HSE, the local hygienist visited the children in the services and showed them the correct way to brush their teeth. Project workers have now taken on this role themselves and they deliver this workshop to services. Each child

receives a toothbrush and some coloring activities to do at home. These visits are ongoing with at least one service a month being visited.

Parent's information evenings

These information evenings are held at the childcare services and include information on healthy eating policy, sun safety, importance of play with your child, tips on lunches for children and a sugar pack demonstration which shows parents how much sugar is in their child's favorite foods. These evenings are practical and involve the parents as much as possible. Parents are encouraged to engage with activities that children take part in throughout the day.

Physical activity training for childcare staff

Physical activity training such as Buntus Start in Sligo which is run in conjunction with the Sligo Sports Partnership and Action Kids in Leitrim which is funded through the HSE Health Promotion Unit is organised to ensure staff are correctly trained in physical activity. The initial training is 10 hours with refresher sessions annually. On completion of this training each service receives a resource bag in order to implement the programme. In Leitrim in 2010, Buntus Start training has begun since the development of the Leitrim Sports Partnership. This training complements the training childcare workers have already received in Action Kids. In 2007, 32 staff representing 11 services in Leitrim completed the Action Kids training and 52 staff from 9 services in Sligo completed the Buntus Start training.

Resources devised by the Project:

Pre-School Workbook:

The Early Years Health Promotion Project has designed a Pre-School activity book with the specific aim of promoting Healthy Eating, Oral Health and Outdoor Play for 3-5 year olds. Funded by Safefood, this is now a national resource. From inception, the Pre-School Workbook was designed to include parents and childcare workers in activities. Each page deals with a different topic and on each page there is an activity for the childcare workers to do with the children in the service and an activity for the children to do with the parents at home.

There has been a lot of positive feedback from the parents about the workbook with one parent commenting *“We talked about his and his daddy’s lunch and where the ingredients came from”*

Another parent commented that the workbook is *“very age appropriate”* and that their *“child is asking where does bread come from etc”*

The Pre-School Workbook is available to download from www.leitrimchildcare.ie and www.sligochildcare.ie

Summer Scheme Booklet

The Summer Scheme Booklet was designed as a tool to help services to run their own Summer Camps. The booklet gave services information on setting up a summer scheme, and sample games and activities to play with the children. It also contains recipes for healthy snacks for children to make during the summer scheme.

Quarterly Newsletters:

The project publishes a newsletter every 3 months, which includes updates on the participating services, information on training or up coming events and information on healthy eating, physical activity or oral health. Copies are sent to the services for both parents and childcare workers and it is a great way of keeping both childcare workers and parents informed of activities, events and resources on offer.

Early Years Health Promotion Project Evaluations:

Summary Evaluation 2006:

Initial evaluation of the Project (**Mac Eochaidh 2006**) concluded that:

- The policy model developed in the course of the project was good and should be promoted on a broader basis.
- All participating centres were developing written policies in relation to Healthy Eating. The presence of written policies with regard to the physical activity and outdoor play increased substantially, as did the skilling of staff, the delivery of structured physical activity and outdoor play also increased considerably.
- Parents were more aware of healthy eating and physical activities within the centres.
- Children took to the process with energy and excitement and were very open to new ideas and in many cases, parents and guardians were impressed and influenced by their children's positive messages.

Summary Evaluation 2007:

Further evaluation of the project in 2007 involved the completion of a detailed questionnaire with participating childcare providers.

Some of the main findings included:

- 80% reported very good adherence by parents to the healthy eating policy
- 70% reported that children had absolutely no problems with the implementation of healthy eating policy
- 65% reported that, since the implementation of the healthy eating policy, children's dietary behaviors have also improved when outside the childcare centre
- 95% reported that childcare staff members are very committed and convinced of the benefits of healthy eating policy
- 90% reported that their staff availed of training opportunities with structured physical activity programmes
- 75% of services have physical activity policy in place
- 80% of services now use structured physical activity programmes
- 75% reported that the Early Years project has brought worthwhile and lasting changes to their service.

Summary Evaluation 2009:

Consultations completed with parents, children and childcare workers revealed that a number of developments have taken place since 2007 and that there has been significant phase by phase progression.

The findings are;

- 100% of services have healthy eating and physical activity policies in place.
- In 2009, 80% of services conducted reviews of their healthy eating and physical activity policies and are ensuring the implementation of the policies.
- 95% of parents and children comply with the 'no sweets policy'
- Significant attitudinal change to the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity were found in children, parents, and childcare workers. This was evident through daily practice with children, parents and childcare workers now leading the way by sharing and experimenting with new ideas.
- Significant attitudinal change was also evident at the Management level of services as Managers and Management Committees display ownership of Health Promotion within their services by endorsing the project and by committing resources to support its full implementation.
- 31 services availed of and ensured the roll out of the Activity Book for 3-5 Year Olds. A review of the Activity Book indicated that parents and childcare workers found the resource to be practical especially as activities were shared between the home environment and the childcare service.
- 90% of services availed of training opportunities in physical activity programmes, planting, outdoors Arts & Crafts and making their own wormery.
- 95% of childcare services attended the conference 'Exploring the Great Outdoors'.

Evaluation of the Project (2009):

Methodology:

31 services on the Early Years Health Promotion Project from both Sligo and Leitrim participated in the evaluation. 2 students on placement from the Early Childhood Education course at Sligo Institute of Technology designed a questionnaire for service managers to fill out with the student.

The following is the analysis of the questionnaires which was completed by a Health Promotion and Public Health Student from the Sligo Institute of Technology.

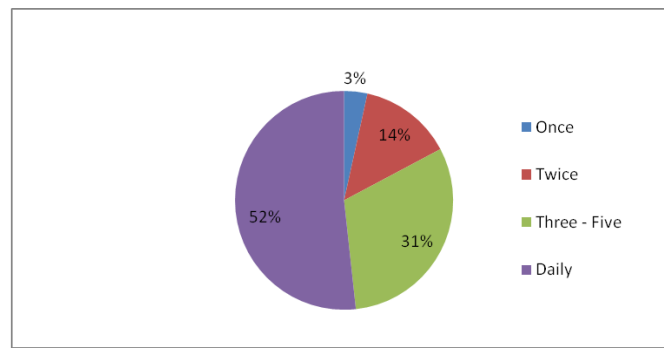
Physical Activity

Q.1 What physical activity programmes are used in your service?

The following is a list of activity programmes that were used:

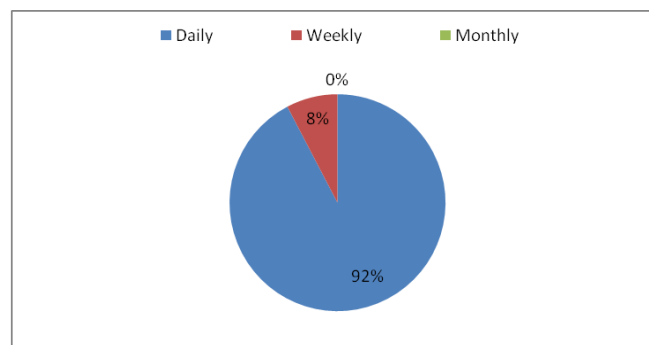
Outdoor play, play area, main hall, tricycle, balls, physical activities, Action Kids, exercises, sticky kids, aerobics, games, movement, bared toed, Football, Badminton, skipping, dancing, monkey nastics, music takes, Buntus, vegetable garden, free play, sport and music games, all staff are involved in sports outside of work so we try incorporate some of that, dancing, use the park.

Q.1a How many times a week is the programme implemented?



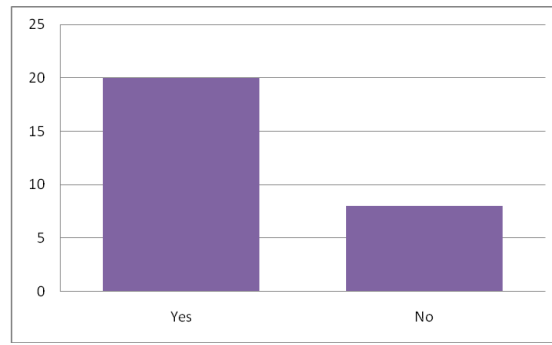
52% of the services reported having implemented physical activity programmes into their daily routine. 31% of services implemented it between 3-5 times weekly, 14% implemented it twice weekly and 3% only undertook physical activity once in the week.

Q.1b How much of this would be outdoors?



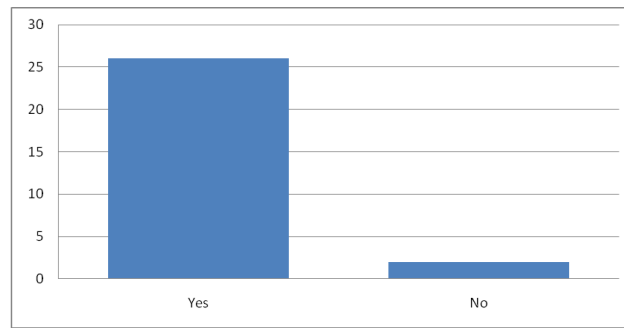
For the services that did answer the question 92% of the services said their physical activity sessions are outdoors, weather permitting. 8% only go outdoors weekly.

Q.1c For outdoor play is there an Outdoor Play Policy?



20 of the services have an outdoor play policy, 8 services do not have an outdoor play policy and 2 services did not answer the question.

Q.1c For outdoor play is there a Sun Safety Policy?



26 of the services have a sun safety policy, 2 services don't have a sun safety policy and 2 services did not answer the question.

Q.1d How is the physical activity programme being implemented into your curriculum?

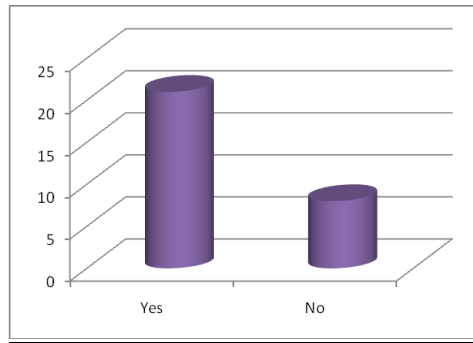
Four of the services said it was part of the curriculum, twenty one out of the thirty services do the programmes everyday some having it during a specific time during the day but others do it at different times. One service said the programmes were implemented whenever possible, another service said they try to include it as much as they can in their monthly plan. One other service said they let the children decide, as they like to get them involved. The remaining two services found it hard to include it in the daily routine due to the varying ages of the children and also the weather.

Q.1e Are there any obstacles to implementing physical activity in the service?

Some of the obstacles mentioned include:

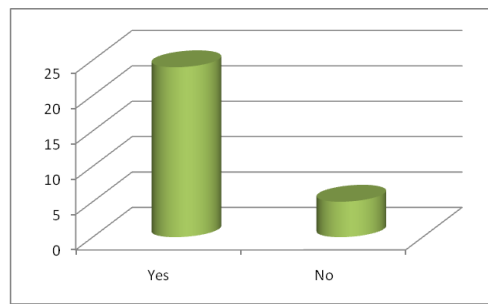
There are loads of boys in service so it's hard to keep them focused, staff and parents attitudes to going outside in bad weather, shortage of staff, lack of access to indoor and outdoor play area, the weather, varying age groups, rude graffiti, broken glass and sometimes undesirable people in the outside area, located near the road so can't play football outside and difficulty with special needs children.

Q.2a Do you feel that there is adequate outdoor play equipment?



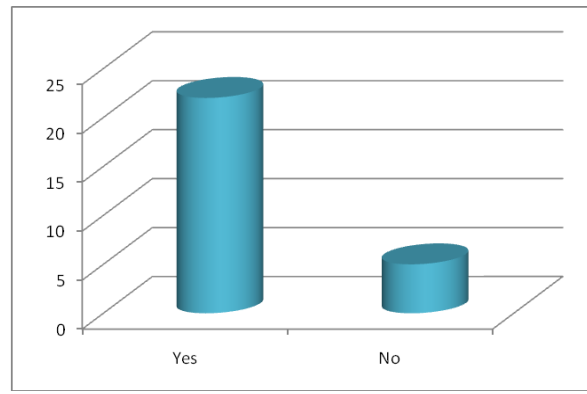
1 of the services didn't answer the question, 21 of the services felt there was adequate outdoor play equipment and 8 services felt there was adequate outdoor play equipment.

Q.2b Do you feel that there is adequate outdoor space for play?



1 of the services didn't answer the question, 24 of the services felt there was adequate outdoor space for play and 5 of the services felt there was not adequate outdoor space for play.

Q.2c Do you feel that there is adequate indoor space?



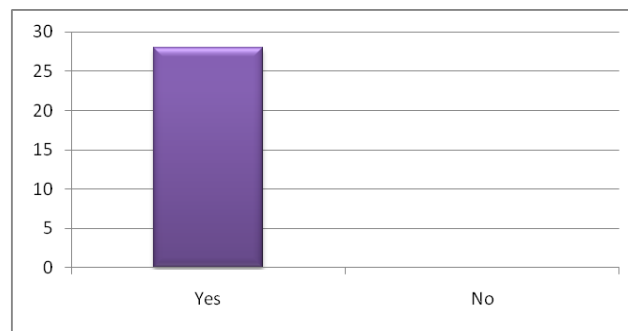
3 of the services did not answer the question, 22 of the services felt there was adequate indoor space for play and 5 of the services felt there was not adequate space for indoor play.

Q.3 Are there any other topics you would like added to the summer scheme booklet?

The majority said no however some things were mentioned including games for younger children aged 0-2 years old, drama ideas, outing ideas, non - cookery recipes, nature ideas and different games for 4-11 year olds.

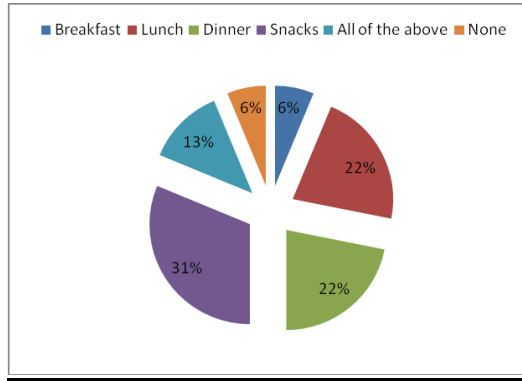
Healthy Eating

Q.4 Do you have a healthy eating policy in your service?



28 of the services answered the question and all of them had healthy eating policies in their services.

Q.5 What meals/snacks are provided?

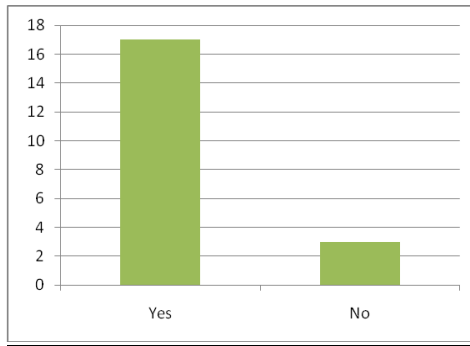


6% of the services do not provide any food. From the services that do provide meals 31% of them provide snacks, 22% provide dinner, 22% provide lunch, 6% provide breakfast and 13% of services provide breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks.

Q.6 How is the food pyramid used as a guide for your menu?

Nine of the services did not comment, two services said it was not used as a guide. The remaining said it was used as a guide for planning various meals everyday with one of those services having their own pyramid in the service where the children can stick their own foods on it.

Q.7a Can parents access the menu?

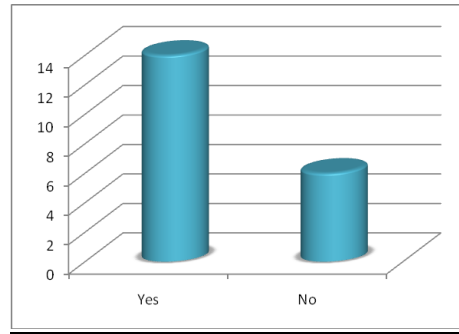


10 of the services didn't answer the question, 17 of the services said yes parents can access the menu and 3 of the services said parents had no access to the menu.

Q.7b If so how can they access it?

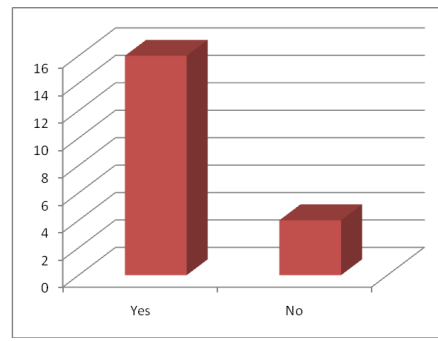
For the services that did provide parental access to the menus, the majority had it displayed however one service gave parents a copy when registering the child in the service and the remaining services parents had to ask for access if they wanted it.

Q.8a Does the service keep written records of the menu and the success of them?



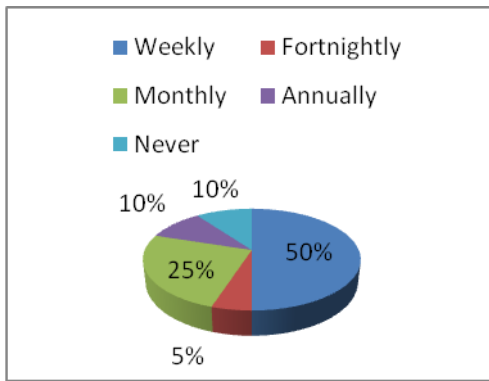
Out of the 20 services that answered the question 14 of them keep written records of the menu and the success of them and 6 of them did not keep any written record.

Q.8b Can you provide a copy of your menu today?



Out of the 20 services that answered the question, 16 of them could provide a copy of the menu on the day of completing the questionnaire, 4 services could not.

Q.9 How often is the menu reviewed?



50% of the services review their menu weekly, 5% review it every 2 weeks, 25% review it monthly, 10% review it annually and 10% of the services said they never reviewed their menu.

Q.10 Are all children's dietary requirements, religious/cultural requirements and allergies considered in the menu?

100% of the services consider children's dietary requirements, religious/cultural requirements and allergies.

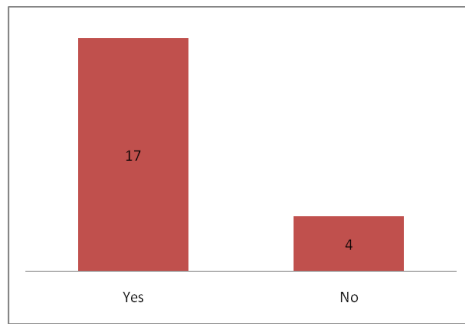
Q.11 What is the policy in regards to special occasions?

In eleven of the services a cake and sweets are provided by the parents, two of the services don't have cake or treats, one service provides cake and, fruit and yoghurt. The remaining services provide cake and treats some of them limiting the amount of unhealthy food.

Q.12 If children arrive with unhealthy food, how is it dealt with in your service?

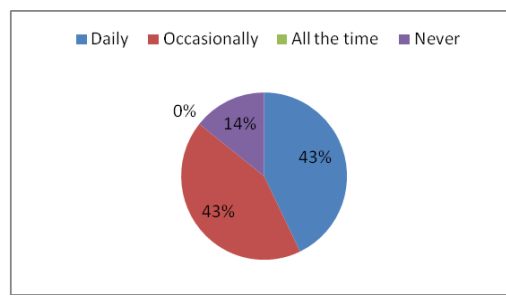
Five of the services said that the children simply don't arrive in with unhealthy food and the remaining services said the food is taken of the child as it is not allowed and the food is sent back home again, one service accompanying the food with a note to parents explaining why the food was sent home and suggesting different options.

Q.13a Are the children encouraged to take part in the preparation of the food?



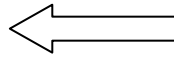
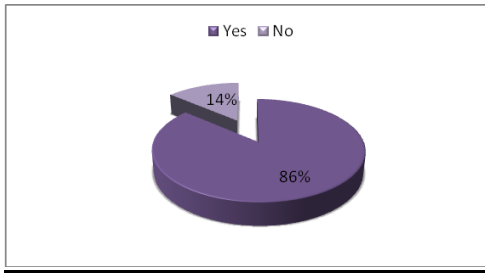
9 of the services didn't answer the question, 17 of the services said yes that children were encouraged to take part in the preparation of food within the service and 4 services said the children were not encouraged to take part in the preparation of food within the service.

Q.13b If so when?



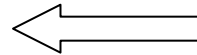
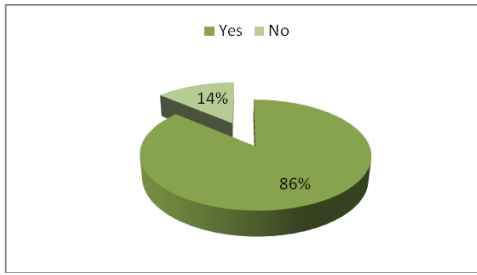
Out of the 17 services that said yes that encouraged the children to take part in the preparation of food within the service, 43% of the services encourage them daily, 43% encourage them only occasionally and 14% never encourage them.

Q.14a Do children take part in preparing the table?



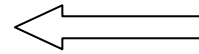
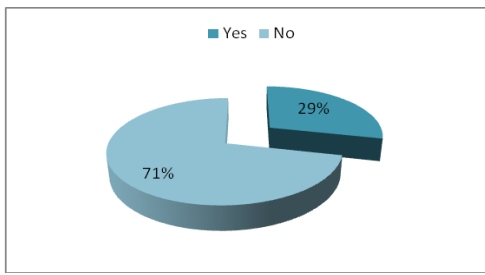
86% of the services have the children involved in preparing the table and 14% do not.

Q.14b Do children take part in cleaning up after?



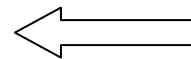
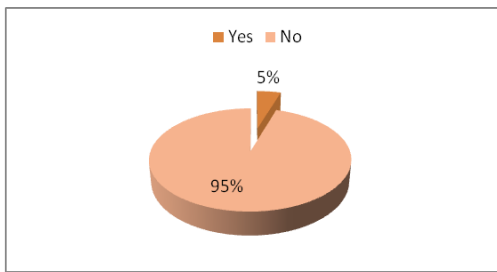
86% of the services have the children involved in cleaning up after a meal and 14% do not.

Q.14c Do children take part in washing dishes?



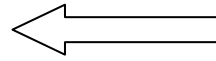
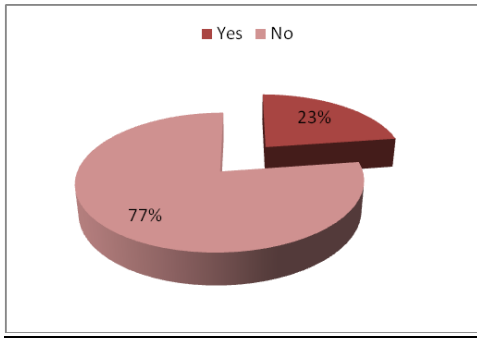
71% of the services do not have the children involved in washing the dishes after a meal and 29% have the children involved in washing dishes.

Q.14d Do children take part in peeling?



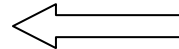
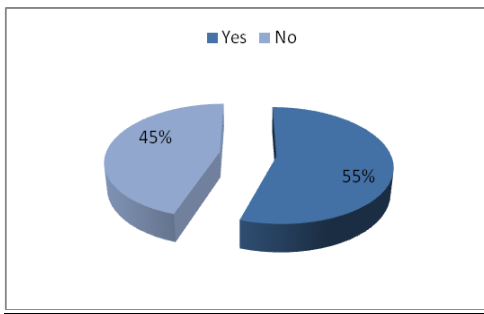
5% of the services have the children involved in peeling food before a meal and 95% do not.

Q.14d Do children take part in Slicing food?



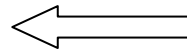
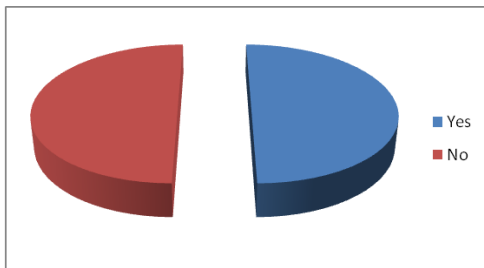
23% of the services have the children involved in slicing food before a meal and 77% do not.

Q.14e Do children take part in Buttering bread?



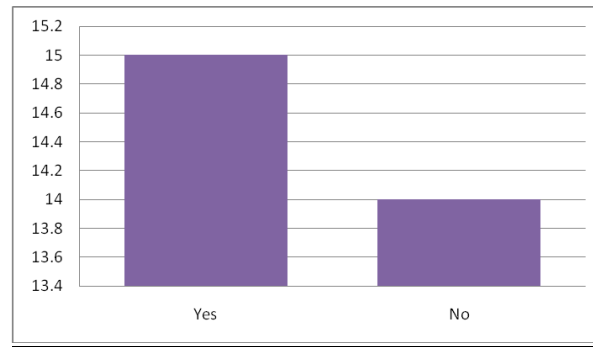
55% of the services have the children involved in buttering bread and 45% do not.

Q.14f Do children take part in any other food preparation activities?



50% of the services have the children involved in other food preparation activities 50% do not.

Q.15 Do staff sit and eat with the children?



15 of the services said they do sit with the children at mealtime and 14 services do not, one service did not answer the question

Q.16 Are mealtimes always at a set time?

97% of the services have a set mealtime; the remaining 3% do not have set mealtimes.

Q.17a Are mealtimes made socially enjoyable for the children?

100% of the services said that the mealtimes were made socially enjoyable.

Q.17b If so how do you make them more socially enjoyable?

The majority of services just sit down with the children in a relaxed atmosphere and talk about their day or whatever they want, two of the services use placemats and tablecloths and get the children involved in meal preparation, three of the services make up songs about food and another service simply talks about food and tries to link it to themes.

Q.18 Is hand washing implemented at appropriate times especially before meals?

100% of the services implement hand washing at appropriate times.

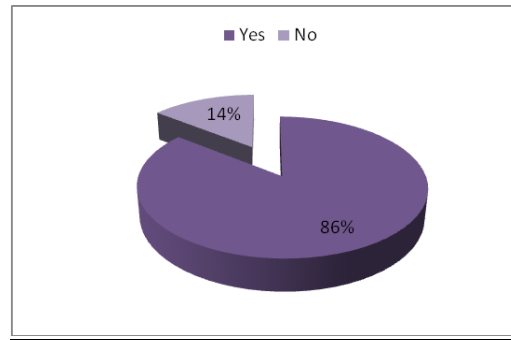
Q.19 What activities have been implemented (if any) to promote healthy eating in a fun, positive way?

Some of the activities mentioned include bakery, food tasting, cutting out pictures of food and grouping them, making their own wraps and toasted sandwiches, sing songs about food, preschool workbook activities, food pyramid activity, healthy eating day once a month and discussing food, fruit colouring sheets, activities on eating food, food hygiene activities, sugar packs showing how much sugar is in sweets, make smoothies, food demonstrations, talk about food we like to eat, read books about healthy eating, arts and crafts relating to food, developing menus, play "go shopping".

Q.20a Are parents supportive of the Healthy Eating Policy?

Twenty-seven of the services said yes that the parents support the healthy eating policy, one service said only sometimes and only two said that the parents don't really pass any heed on the policy.

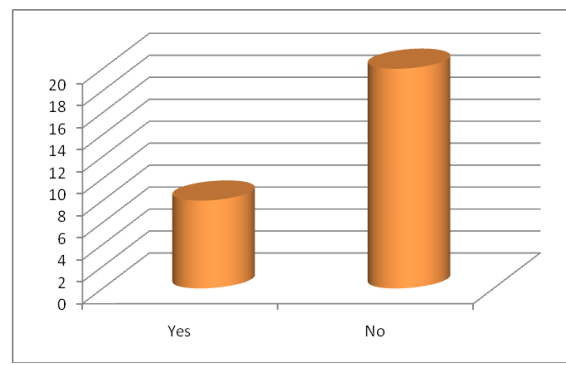
Q.20b Can you provide a copy of your written Healthy Eating Policy today?



86% of the services could provide a copy of the healthy eating policy on the day of completing the questionnaire; the remaining 14% could not.

Oral Hygiene

Q.21a Has your service received a visit from the oral hygienist?



Out of the 28 services that completed the question, 20 of them had not received visits from the oral hygienist and only 8 of them had received visits.

Q.21b If so what were the benefits from this visit?

From those that had received the visit, the benefits mentioned were that it recognized problems with some children and the new toothbrushes encouraged children to brush their teeth, children hugely enjoyed it and really seemed to take it all in, it went well, everyone was enthusiastic after it, good information was given, children were receptive to it, great feedback from parents and children, Fantastic.

Q.22a Regarding the oral hygiene has there been feedback from parents?

Out of the 8 services that received the visit from the oral hygienist, only 5 of those services got feedback from the parents.

Q.22b If so what was the feedback?

Parents thought it was brilliant and helpful, Impressed that the children came home and were telling them how to brush their teeth properly and were very pleased that it was done.

Q.23a Did your service receive toothbrushes?

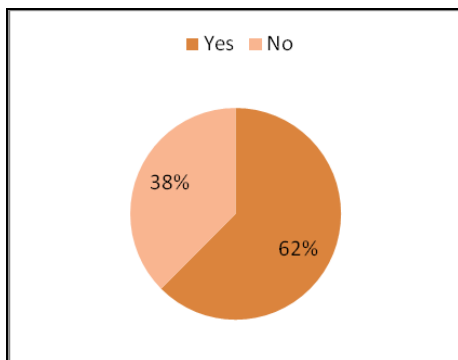
All services that received the visit from the oral hygienist received toothbrushes.

Q.23b How are you incorporating oral health in your service?

The majority of the services said they talked about oral health to incorporate it into their routine and in one service parents asked for the children’s teeth to be brushed in the service. Another two of the services said they sang songs about the topic.

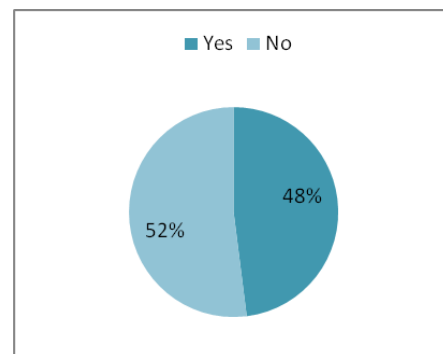
General

Q.24a Did your service receive The 3 - Week Menu Plan?



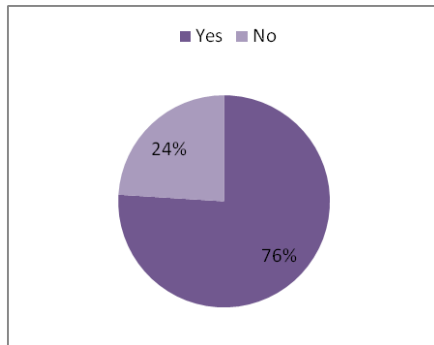
62% of the services received the 3 – week menu plan, 38% did not receive it. When asked was the 3 – Week menu plan beneficial to your service, 87% of the services said it was beneficial and 13% said it wasn't beneficial. The following comments were made about the 3 – week menu plan:
Felt it was aimed more at full time services, very good and helpful, loads of ideas and it's easy to follow, didn't like how there was a different desert for each day as we feel Friday should be the only desert day, excellent variety, child friendly, we used a lot of the ideas in our service, we loved how they do each menu with ingredients per number of children, it was hard to enforce as kitchen has their own ways of doing things, not good as I provide wet dinners as its appropriate for the group I cater to, in general we stuck with dinners in the book, good variety of snacks, the guidelines for what to base menus on are good.

Q.24a Did your service receive The Summer Scheme Booklet?



48% of the services received the summer scheme booklet, 52% did not receive it. When asked was the summer scheme booklet beneficial to your service, 83% said yes it was beneficial to the service and the remaining 17% said it was not beneficial. The following comments were made about the summer scheme booklet:
Good ideas, helpful, useful and lots of fun.

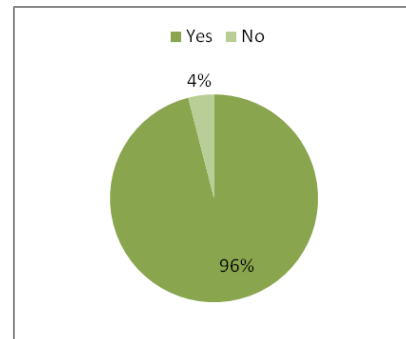
**Q.24a Did your service receive
The preschool workbook?**



76% of the services received the preschool workbook and 24% of services did not. When asked was the preschool workbook beneficial to your service, 89% of the services said yes it was, the remaining 11% didn't feel their service benefited from the preschool workbook. The following comments were made about the preschool workbook:

Only starting to do it but children do seem interested, brilliant and kids loved it, very good, the bigger size is better, Interesting, easy to work with and children enjoy it, the guidelines are helpful, good but some go home and never come back so don't know if their being done, more direction needed and more planning around it would be better, great idea, children found it hard because they were only three but was enjoyable and it involved one to one to do it.

The newsletter?



96% of the services received the newsletter and 4% did not. When asked was the newsletter beneficial to your service 96% of the services said it was beneficial to them and 4% said it was not. The following comments were made about the newsletter:

Good for giving parents information, very good, Informative, keeps everyone up to date, Interesting, good to know what's going on, good ideas, children loved to see their pictures, well laid out and get a bit more often maybe.

Q.25a Were the newsletters distributed to all parents and staff?

Out of the services that received the newsletter, 88% of them distributed the newsletter to all staff and parents. Only 25% of the services that distributed the newsletter to the parents received feedback about the newsletter.

Q.26 what difficulties if any do you think that parents and staff have experienced in supporting the current policies in practice? Please describe.

The main problem was with parent's attitudes and staff were also hard to come around to the idea of change. One service said because of their geographical location their service is lucky as the parents are all professionally educated and support all the healthy eating.

Q.27a Do you feel that support visits are beneficial for you and if so how?

All services agreed that yes the support visits were very beneficial. The reasons given for the services thinking the visits were beneficial are:

Informative, good for questions and answers, gives ideas and tips, helps you to know you're on the right track, Keeps you up to date, good guidelines, we get to know what's going on and can get help if we need it, the project workers get all involved enthusiastic, good to get contact, shows new ways for doing things you thought were impossible, good to feed back positives and negatives and to get support, there good to get outside views, helpful, children get to see different faces, support, gives energy to the project, project workers are very enthusiastic and are great with children.

Q.27c Are there further areas, which may need addressing?

Some of the areas that services felt needed addressing were:

Parental involvement was the main one along with social welfare grants, more support visits, information on appropriate meal sizes and portions, menu planning, and in particular oral health.

Q.28 In general terms do you feel that the Early Years Health Promotion Project (EYHPP) brought about worthwhile and lasting changes for your service?

Nearly all services agreed that yes the project brought about lasting changes however one felt it didn't make a difference but was good to let parents know that the service was involved in such a project.

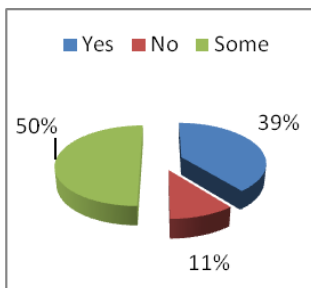
Q.29 looking to the future can you suggest any ways in which the EYHPP could be improved or made more effective?

The services involved felt that the following things could be done to increase the effectiveness of the project:

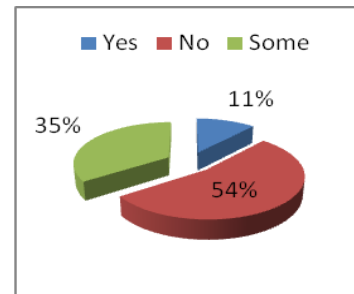
More visits for food activities, physical activity and oral health, getting a grant, try and get parents involved, more recipe ideas, especially for vegetarian children, Buntus made more regular, more information for younger kids aged 0-2 years old, recycling, more information on children who are overweight or are poor eaters, incorporate planting workshop, language and play therapy areas development, basic food hygiene.

Q.30a Are all staff equipped with the sufficient training skills and qualifications in relation to:

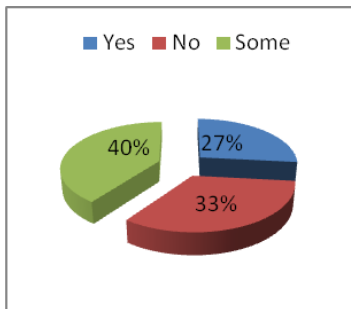
FETAC Level 5



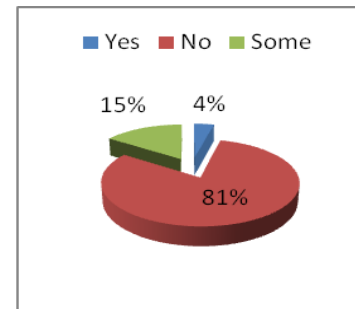
Action Kids (Leitrim only)



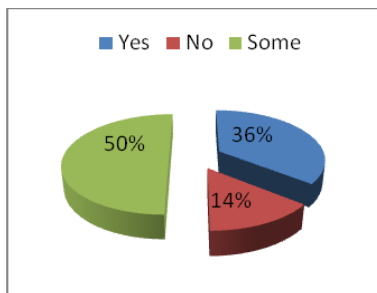
Buntus (Sligo only)



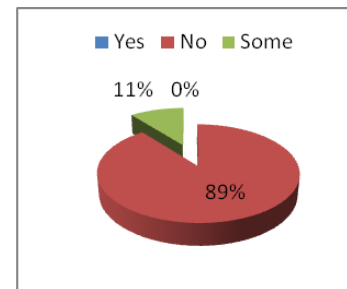
FETAC Level 5 Lifestyle Planning



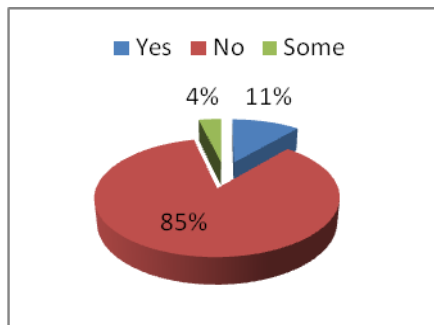
Basic food Hygiene



Active Leadership



Bare Toed Dance



These pie charts show the breakdown of the percentage of staff that are trained in each qualification within the services.

Q.30b Any other training or qualifications that aren't mentioned above?

The following is a list of the qualifications that some of the staff in the services involved has:

Special needs, first aid, child protection, diploma in Montessori, fire protection training, course for autism, FETAC level 5 Irish module, FETAC level 6 childcare, diploma in youth and community, haccp training, level 2 childcare, Barnardos business management, IPPA introductory course, Barnardos level 1 and 2, Portabello cert, social studies degree, manual handling, Respecting differences, diploma in community development, Management training, high scope Ireland, safety in workplace.

Q.30c Is there still a need for further training or refresher courses and if so in what areas?

All services apart from one felt there was a need for further training in the following areas:

Curriculum planning, Fun activities, practical based training, First aid, Action kids, course in relation to childcare, In service training, Manual Handling, children's behavior management and special needs, Buntus, FETAC level 4, Art and drama workshops, child protection, school age children activities like PE, Play, Level 6, Respecting differences, IT, Child psychology, food preparation, nutrition, simple version explaining oral hygiene for parents.

Recent Highlights of the Early Years Health Promotion Project:

EYHPP receives award:

In February of 2009, the Early Years Health Promotion Project was nominated and short-listed for an award by the Children Acts Advisory Board for its services to children and young people. At the Awards ceremony, the project received a Commendation for “Effective Practice in the Interagency Working”.

Since 2005, the number of agencies working in partnership continues to grow and the Early Years Health Promotion Project works with St. Angela’s College, Safe Food HSE, Oral Hygienist HSE, Children and Family Services HSE, Health Promotion Services HSE, the Sports Partnerships and Rossinver Organic Centre.

EYHPP Conference ‘Exploring the Great Outdoors’:

On Saturday the 26th of September, 2009, Leitrim and Sligo County Childcare Committees and the HSE hosted a successful one day conference promoting outdoor play and activity at the Castle Dargan Hotel. The conference was attended by over 103 childcare workers, parents and statutory workers.

Speakers at the conference included Claire Warden of Mindstretchers, which is a dynamic company of people dedicated to providing children with multi-sensory and real-world educational environments through training and consultancy, educational products, nature kindergartens and charitable endeavors. She marveled all with her description of Scotland’s first Nature Kindergarten where children spend up to 90% of their day outdoors.

Following on, Carol Duffy, Training and Quality Specialist with the IPPA (Irish Preschool Play Association) provided expert advice on how to make the most of any outdoor space. She highlighted how our favourite childhood memories such as petal perfume and playing house in the bushes and shrubs remind us of the freedom we had as children, and challenged us to examine how we can provide the same natural environments for our children.

A variety of workshops were also offered and included; ‘Out Arting’ ‘Sowing Seeds for Change’ ‘Naturalistic Outdoor Play’ ‘Developing and Sharing Learning Stories’ and ‘Games

Recommendations for the future:

- To promote the holistic approach of the Early Years Health Promotion Project by developing Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Plans that encompass full day childcare services. This recommendation involves a specific emphasis and the development of three year plans for the 0-1 years and also for school aged childcare services.
- To build on the success of the Early Years conference entitled ‘Exploring the Great Outdoors’ by working with services to raise their awareness and knowledge of the next phase of the health promotion programme. This recommendation will empower and equip services with the skills to develop and take ownership of outdoor areas and gardening projects.
- To follow up and promote the key messages of the naturalistic, outdoor, child development philosophy and provide children with opportunities to have multi sensory experiences and to explore their relationship with the environment.
- Further development of healthy eating programmes through an education programme for parents, which will include information sessions and practical guidelines for those on low incomes. These will be delivered in both leaflet form and through a series of workshops delivered by 2 part-time project workers in conjunction with the development team of both committees.
- Physical activity programmes including the delivery of Buntus and Action Kids programmes in both counties.
- Continued support to the 31 services currently actively involved in the project and to progress 5 services to the development phase.
- Implementation of oral health and sun safety policies for participating services.
- Production and distribution of Early Years Health Promotion Project newsletter.

Steering Committee Recommendations:

- To continue to work within National guidelines and policies including The National Health Strategy ‘Quality and Fairness’ (2001), The National Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-Schools (2004) and Section 5 of the Pre-school regulations and to locate new policies including, Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Aistear, The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

- To maintain the evolutionary dynamic of the project and thus ensure that the project is capable of responding to diverse and changing needs, i.e. lower and oftentimes irregular attendance in after school services due to economic climate or services requests for physical activity sessions for the 0-2 years.
- To ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the development of the Early Years Health Promotion services with further interagency responses and participation.
- To continue to facilitate family involvement and peer support by linking with other agencies and services, i.e. Lifestart, Parent & Toddler Groups.



Children's Baking Event (Sligo)



Art Workshop (Sligo)



Oral Hygiene Workshop (Leitrim)



Food Tasting Session (Leitrim)

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013