



NEWSLETTER

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Sligo County Childcare Committee welcomes new Minister for Children Frances Fitzgerald

Sligo County Childcare Committee would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Minister for Children - Frances Fitzgerald.

Frances trained as a social worker and family therapist and worked in the Mater Hospital, St James' Hospital and Ballymun Child and Family Centre for ten years. She has also worked in inner city communities in London and Dublin and she specialised in family work – including adoption and fostering. Since taking up her appointment as Minister for Children she has launched a consultation to discover the issues of most importance to children and young people to inform development of the new National Children's Strategy (2012-2017).



Speaking at the launch, Minister Fitzgerald said: 'my Department will lead action across Government in relation to children and young people and take decisions in the best interest of children.'

Sligo County Childcare Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish Frances Fitzgerald every good wish as our new Minister for Children and look forward to working with her over the coming years.

(www.francesfitzgerald.ie)

ECCE in Sligo In April 2009 the introduction of the ECCE scheme was announced in the mini budget. In Sligo 54 childcare services applied to enter onto the ECCE scheme which commenced in January 2010 with a further nine entering the scheme for September 2010.

Across Ireland there has been over 94% of eligible children registered into the ECCE scheme. The uptake in Sligo has been above average with the largest uptake of ECCE places. In total 871 children are availing of ECCE in Sligo between the 38 and 50 week scheme.

The interest in ECCE continues to increase with applications from establishing childcare services continuing to be submitted for entry into the scheme for September 2011.

Children born between 2 February 2007 and 30th June 2008 are eligible to enter into the scheme. Parents are required to enrol their child with a childcare provider. In September 2011 childcare services will require parents to complete a Parent Declaration Form, the details of which are required for childcare services to complete an Electric Return and forward the completed forms to OMCYA for verification.

The value of free childcare places is €64.50 per week for children entering into the 38 week scheme and €48.50 per week for the 50 week scheme. This weekly fee is paid directly to childcare services.

siolta

The National Quality Framework
for Early Childhood Education

As we finalise details for our newsletter, we have just one Siolta Seminar left

before the Summer break.

This will be focused on full-day care services and will explore the standard on Parents and Families with all other services having taken part in the Seminar on this standard on May 18th.

On reviewing evaluations from previous seminars and taking on board the feedback from services who attend the Siolta Awareness Raising workshops, discussion took place with BCCN and consequently, the Siolta seminars have now been opened up to all staff teams.

The next time we will meet in relation to Siolta will be in the Autumn when we will look at Legislation and Professional Practice.

Pyjama Day Fundraiser

Many childcare services took part in the NCNA Pyjamas Day with children wearing their Pyjamas to their childcare service for the day. SCCC visited several of the childcare services where they were met by many excited children wearing Dora, Ben Ten, Princess, Spiderman to name just a few of the pyjamas being worn that day. Congratulations to all childcare services that took part and contributing towards the €251,633 in funding raised to date towards the Hospice Homecare for Children.



Respecting Difference

What is the Respecting Difference Programme?

The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) was developed by Early Years – the organisation for young children and the Peace Initiatives (Pii, USA). It combines a series of 5 cartoon media messages and aims to build a better understanding among children of physical, racial and cultural differences. Bullying behaviours and the inclusion of Traveller children are also addressed with the training.

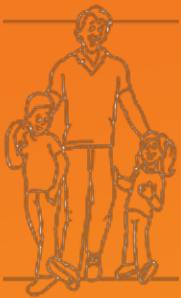
The cartoons are set in a play park and feature characters young children can easily identify with. The messages in the cartoons are reinforced in the early years settings through the use of resources and interactive activities that prompt children to talk about their feelings and attitudes to the issues explored in the cartoons and staff are supported through a comprehensive training and support package – The Respecting Difference Programme. The messages also help children to receive information in appropriate ways and within a context where they can ask questions. They encourage the strong robust competent child and help children feel valued as people given the lack of control they have over their lives until they are older.

Over the past 3 years, Sligo County Childcare Committee have worked with Early Years to bring the Programmes to as many services as possible in the County. Over the 3 years of the Programmes, 25 services have participated in the Respecting Difference Programme and 75 staff have taken part in the training. Each service has been provided with a comprehensive resource pack to assist in the implementation of the programme in their setting and their work has been supported throughout by an Early Years Advisor.

Sligo County Childcare Committee are privileged to have been able to work on this collaborative project with the Early Years Organisation to bring this insightful, practical training into childcare services in Ireland.

As the 3-year Programme draws to a close, we would like to thank most sincerely the Early Years Organisation, but we also wish to thank you, the childcare services and practitioners, for taking part in the Programme and for bringing the message of the Programme to so many children in your care. We have no doubt that the benefits of your hard work and dedication will be evident in the lives of the children in your care and in society in the years ahead.





CHILDMINDING



**“One small step for Men
One Giant Leap for childcare”**

In recent years the issue of men becoming childcare workers has become a very popular topic among childcare professionals. Studies by Owen (2002), shows that, relatives and indeed childcare providers are very much in favour of men as carers.

MiC (Men in Childcare) Ireland was founded in 2004 following the first Men in Childcare Conference which was hosted by Kilkenny County Childcare Committee. MiC Ireland is part of an International Men in Childcare Network.

The aim of MiC is to support and encourage Irish men who are interested in pursuing a career in childcare. The position at the moment where there are so few men working in Childcare sustains inequality, it excludes men and it limits diversity.



The MiC network has come across stories of men who feel that fear of suspicion and distrust from others put them off going in to a career in childcare. The MiC network can show a number of examples where men if they were encouraged to do so and supported in their decision, would take on caring work with children.

Training is an integral part of childcare for all practitioners and therefore men, who opt for a career in childcare and who undertake the training and qualify, are in a position to deliver the same professional childcare as women.

For further information and support phone Noreen McNamara at Sligo County Childcare 071 9148860 or email menicirl@gmail.com



Network Meetings

Network meetings for child-minders continue with topics of interest being covered with presentations or workshops at each meeting. In March we had a presentation on road safety “Simon and Friends”. Each child-minder received an information pack which included a CD and Teachers Guide. This presentation proved to be very popular with all who attended. In May the topic is Arts and Crafts. Network meetings continue bi-monthly.



A Group of childminders and trainees attending a network Meeting in March 2011. Presentation by Viola Craig "Simon & Friends" Road Safety Programme

Summer scheme ideas on places and people to visit

As summer schemes and summer camps are being planned and places to go are being organised, SCCC have put together a list of places in Sligo and surrounding areas that are FREE to visit.

Forest	Hazelwood forest	Union Wood	Slishwood
Parks	Mitchel Curley Ballymote	Doorly Park	Boyle Forest Park
Beaches	Rosses Point Enniscrone Golden strand – Lisadell	Strandhill Streedagh Coney Island	Dunmorran Strand Mullaghmore

Other places of interest

Strandhill Airport	Ballymote Castle
Dooney rock	Knocknarea/Queen Maeve's grave
Yeats Grave	King House, Boyle
Model Niland	Donkey Sanctuary, Castlebaldwin
Finner Camp	National Parks and Wildlife, Ballinacfad

People to visit

Children can make appointments to visit and interview interesting people in the community. This could include:

Garda	Farmer	Florist	Hotel Manager
Nurse	Chef	Sligo Rovers	Cinema Manager
Doctor	Solicitor	Lorry Driver	Baker
Mechanic	Dress Maker	Chemist	Hawkswell Manager
Bee Keeper	Builder	Dentist	Security Guard
Journalist	Photographer	Crafter	Supermarket Manager

Some childcare services may have parents who can arrange for a group of children to visit their workplace, get a tour of their building and interview members of staff. Children can be involved in researching places to go, writing the letter to request the invitation and getting quote from transport providers and sending photos and thank you letter.

PLAY AWARENESS WEEK - 20th – 25th June 2011

Play 2 Learn / Learn 2 Play

The Border Counties Childcare Network (BCCN) invites you to join with them in highlighting the importance of play for young children during Play Awareness Week which will take place within the Border Counties and Meath between the 20th and 25th of June. During this week BCCN and Sligo County Childcare Committee will be highlighting the importance of play and how it promotes children's health, well-being, learning and development. We also aim to highlight the valuable work carried out by Early Childhood practitioners on a daily basis while working with young children and their families. As part of Play Awareness Week Teddy Bear Picnics will take place in two venues, Cosy Cats, The Mall and Magic Moments, Aclare, on Tuesday June 21st from 10am to 12pm.

Given how important play is, the BCCN has had a special song commissioned called 'The Play Song'. You will receive a copy of the song on CD in early June. It will also be uploaded onto the BCCN website www.bccn.ie and You Tube from the 5th June for parents and others to access their families and young children.

We are asking all Early Childhood practitioners, children and parents if possible to become familiar with the song so it may be sung and danced to throughout Play Week.

Should you require further information please contact the BCCN office on 047 - 72469 or visit the BCCN website: www.bccn.ie



THE PLAY SONG

Making a Song and Dance about Play
In Sun and Rain we go outside
To run and jump and try to hide
The air is nice it helps me grow
Outside is best
We all know
I'll Play outside today

With my friends we have lots to say
We talk and laugh and we all play
Taking turns, being heard
Look and listen as we learn
I'll play with my friends today

Inside, Outdoors, I like to explore
How things work and what they're for
I can turn them round Upside down
Show everybody what I've found
I'll play to explore to-day

And when I'm happy or if I'm sad
I play when I feel good or bad
It helps me know how to show
What I feel so I can grow
I'll play I'll play to-day

It is intended that Play Week in Sligo will focus on outdoor activities and will be marked with the following events:

- A Teddy Bear's Picnic - Sligo and Tubbercurry
- Walking with Babies
- Focus on Nature workshops

And a final 'play' date for your diary – Sligo National Play will take place on Sunday 26th June in Doorly Park from 2.00 to 5.00 p.m.

Parents Support Network

The Parents Support Network will hold their annual Family Fun Day on Saturday 18th June next @ 2.30 p.m. in Merville Community Centre. All children with disabilities and their families will receive a warm welcome and we look forward to seeing a large crowd for what is always a very successful event. For further details please contact either of the following:
Yvonne Sheridan (087) 7563685~Samantha Love (086) 3866959

Paediatric First Aid

Paediatric Emergency First Aid is a one day course for Childcare Providers and Parents. Participants will develop an understanding of First Aid and what procedures to follow when dealing with various life threatening emergency situations such as Febrile convulsions, choking, burns management and a variety of other emergency first aid techniques including CPR. This one day course gives particular emphasis on dealing with common types of accidents and illnesses associated with babies and children. If you are interested in doing Paediatric First Aid Training please contact Isobel for more information. This training will only run subject to demand.
Email: isobel@sligochildcare.ie

Early Childhood Ireland

SCCC extends every good wish to the amalgamation of NCNA and IPPA in the establishment of Early Childhood Ireland and the announcement of the following appointments on www.ncna.ie
Irene Gunning will be Chief Executive Officer, and Teresa Heaney, Chief Operating Officer, as the new body is established. They will lead the completion of the process of establishment of Early Childhood Ireland and guide its strategic development over the next two years. The posts will then be combined, and Teresa Heaney will succeed Irene Gunning as CEO. The Chairpersons of the two Boards said that the appointments reflect the commitment to a strengthened organisation and the confidence of the Boards in the leadership of the merger process to date.

