

## QUALITY DINING EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The nursery is the ideal venue to introduce Children to the social aspect of sharing mealtimes with others, while introducing healthy eating habits. The pre-school years are a great time to help Children form positive attitudes towards food and to develop good eating habits, attitudes and lifestyles. Ongoing encouragement is necessary by all staff members. A presentation for Childcare Workers to highlight positive methods to implement which can enhance snack time and meal time for Young Children. This presentation took place as part of the Continuing Professional Development Programme that has been co-ordinated by SCCC in partnership with NCNA. The next presentation to take place on this programme will be Observational Techniques which will take place on Tuesday 12th May at 7.30pm. Anybody interested in attending should contact Joan or Viola at SCCC to book their place.

## CHILDMINDERS

A childminders network meeting was held at the offices of SCCC Cleveragh on Thursday 26th February 2009.

## FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME

The guest speaker at this meeting was Paul Ryan Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Sligo County Fire Service. Paul spoke to the group on the importance of fire safety in the home. He stressed the need to have the correct type and number of smoke alarms, and that they should be checked at regular intervals. He also spoke of the need for an evacuation plan and to practice this as part of regular fire drill.



Physical activity programme for childminders, MCR community centre

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Shelia Ryan "Early Years Health Promotion Worker" SCCC gave a talk on the importance of Planned Physical Development Activities for Pre School Children. Shelia brought along some items from the Buntus Start Resource Pack and demonstrated their use in a childminding setting.

As a follow up to this a training workshop on Physical Activity for Pre School Children was held on Thursday 2nd April 2009 in MCR Community Centre, Mail Coach Road, Sligo. Those who participated in this training were given a small resource pack and follow up support in the months ahead.

## TRAINING

Training continues in First Aid, Child Protection, QAP (Quality Awareness Programme) and CPM (Child Minding Practice Module)

Enrolment for QAP will take place in the SCCC offices on Thursday April 9th at 7pm and anyone interested in becoming a Childminder is advised to partake of this training. This training is free and runs over five weeks one night each week.

The QAP is a requirement for any Childminder wishing to apply for the Childminders Development Grant. Application forms and further details available from Noreen McNamara Childminding Advisory Officer with SCCC on 071 9148860 or email noreen@sligochildcare.ie

## CHILDMINDING "The Business"

Promoting your childminding business is not always easy. On the 23rd March Ann Carton Sligo Central Pre School & Crèche made a presentation to childminders wishing to promote themselves and their service to Parents.

It is important for parents to know that Voluntary Notified Childminders are those who have notified their service to their local County Childcare Committee and have availed of all the training support and information which will assist them in their efforts to deliver a quality home from home childcare service.

Further information available from Noreen McNamara Childminding Advisory Officer with SCCC on 071 9148860 or email noreen@sligochildcare.ie

## THE DAISYCHAIN CHILDCARE CHAMPIONS AWARDS



Sligo County Childcare Committee are now inviting Parents and Guardians to nominate Childcare Workers and Childminders for the Childcare Champions Awards.



Who you nominate is up to you - it could be your Childminder or a Childcare worker who is working in the Crèche, Day Care, Playgroup, Montessori Pre School, Naonrai or After School Club where your child attends.

All Childcare Workers and Childminders who are nominated will receive a special certificate to acknowledge their nomination, which will be presented at the Childcare Champions Awards Ceremony, which will take place at Castle Dargan Hotel on Thursday 28th May at 7.30pm.

Application forms to nominate childcare workers and childminders can be received by contacting: Sligo County Childcare Committee, Unit 6 Cleveragh Retail Park, Cleveragh, Sligo. Phone 071 9148860 or Email [sligochildcare@gmail.com](mailto:sligochildcare@gmail.com)

Closing date for submission of nomination forms is Thursday 7th May at 4pm

# SLIGO COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

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Coiste Cúrainn Leanaí Chontae Sligigh

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# newsletter

## SLIGO AND LEITRIM COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE ACHIEVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

There was a celebratory mood across the North West as Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committee's were nominated for an award by the Children Acts Advisory Board for its services to children and young people. The Early Years Health Promotion Project developed in collaboration between Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committees was one of three agencies that were nominated for its effective interagency work.



From left: Sharon Boles Manager SCCC, Carol Dillon Acting Manager LCCC, Grainne Kelly Early Years Health Promotion Project worker, Emma Ball Health Promotion Officer HSE, Sheila Ryan Early Years Health Promotion Project worker, Pascal Mooney Chairperson LCCC, Roisin Mc Glone Chairperson SCCC.

Attending the Awards ceremony on the 19th of February in Croke Park were Sharon Boles (Manager SCCC), Carol Dillon (Manager LCCC), Emma Ball Health Promotion Officer (HSE), Sheila Ryan and Grainne Kelly (Early Years Health Promotion Project Workers). Sharon Boles and Carol Dillon expressed their thanks to the two Early Years Health Promotion Project Workers and the thirty childcare services whose hard work and dedication have ensured the success of the project. The HSE were also acknowledged and thanked for its continued commitment in supporting and funding the project.

Commencing in 2004 the Early Years Health Promotion Project aimed to develop a model for working with early years services to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Being very aware that the early years are critically important for the formation of good habits and a healthy lifestyle, a steering committee was established to oversee and guide the project. The steering committee consisted of representation from the Health Promotion Team (HSE West), Children and Families (HSE), representatives from Community Childcare Services, Sligo Sports Partnership and also Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committees.

Working to support childcare providers to develop and implement healthy eating policies based on the National Food and Nutritional Guidelines for Pre-schools (2004), the Early Years Health Promotion Project workers have conducted on site support visits, food tasting activities, cookery demonstrations, menu planning and parent's information evenings.

As the project also aims to promote physical activity and quality outdoor play, training in Buntus Start in Sligo and Action Kids in Leitrim was provided. While the project has involved a lot of hard work there has also been plenty of fun as the childcare services held aerobics with children, sports days, Irish dancing and gardening sessions.

If you would like further information on the Early Years Health Promotion Project please contact Sligo County Childcare Committee on (071) 9148860 or Leitrim County Childcare Committee on (071) 9640870 or alternatively on [www.sligochildcare.ie](http://www.sligochildcare.ie) or [www.leitrimchildcare.ie](http://www.leitrimchildcare.ie)

## REGGIO EMILIO

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational philosophy focused on preschool and primary education. It was started by the parents of the villages around Reggio Emilia in Italy after World War II to eliminate fascism. The destruction from the war, parents believed, necessitated a new, quick approach to teaching their children. They felt that it is in the early years of development that children are forming who they are as an individual. This led to creation of a program based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment.

## REGGIO EMILIO

written by Maureen Walsh

In April 2008, 23 NCNA Childcare members/ staff and myself travelled to Reggio Emilio in Italy to participate in a week of training and to visit the renowned Early Childhood Centre there. The trip was funded by the Childcare Business Development Network, which is part of Skillnet Funding for Childcare training throughout Ireland. The experience was very rewarding for all participants who took away real pearls of wisdom from the Reggio practice.

*"The entire trip from beginning to end was such a worthwhile experience for me. It was a pure delight to observe and study the approach of Reggio to Early Childhood Education."*



Seeing children with teachers who are so passionate about their profession and teach from the heart was very inspirational. These teachers base their approach on putting the child at the centre and as such they encourage each child to use their own natural talent. It is a very creative environment, children are actively encouraged to problem solve, explore different avenues and think creatively. The Reggio philosophy is based on skilled observation of each child which informs the curriculum and results in a very safe and vibrant environment for every child to learn and develop in their own way.

Our week was divided in to lectures, workshops and visits. Everywhere the children at Reggio were very happy, relaxed, and fully engaged in all activities. One of the striking things was the miniature items which resembled the real world, such as cooking utensils, sinks, saucepans this really contributed to the quality of the children's play.



The environment at Reggio is warm, nurturing and vibrant. Classrooms are filled with indoor plants and bathed in natural light, there are extensive use of mirrors and photographs and everywhere you look the children's work is displayed proudly and sometimes unexpectedly. Hanging from a ceiling or framed using flowers. It is clear that Reggio put a lot of effort into creating this interesting environment for all ages including the infant and toddler centres and the preschools. Here, there were many light boxes and projectors to explore light and colour.

In one school there was a car engine in the middle of a room where lots of children explored the different parts, taking parts from the engine and adding some.

The central philosophy of the school is respect for the children and their own individuality. Reggio truly are masters of this and they value every child's potential. They are able to put this into practice through keen observation and individual curriculum for the children.

One of the key things for me was the use of recycled equipment at the schools. Every classroom uses natural, everyday products and recycled materials to create an Aladdin's cave for learning and also to nurture an appreciation for our planet. I also found it interesting that it just wasn't the general areas but also down to how and where each piece of equipment was placed in the school, designed to engage the child more. This is an aspect which we have introduced in Benbulbin Creche.

We now use recycled materials such as plumbing connections, which the children connect together. These have been carefully placed for them to play with, it really has made a difference. In our crèche we now have a real keyboard and telephone which the children play within their office. In the dress up areas we have introduced hair dryers and have real motorbike helmets for the children to play with. We are collecting real musical instruments for the children so that they can learn about sound.

The Reggio methods forecast the learning outcomes for the child. Then they plot their learning potential. Every avenue is explored, so that children grow in self esteem, but most of all have a rich learning experience. Children are our most valuable assets and our role in childcare must play an active part in making their development an enjoyable, safe and nurturing one.

*"Reggio believes that the children can do a hundred of everything with the variety of resources they use and the freedom they have to create"*

(The complete article can be viewed on the website [www.sligochildcare.ie](http://www.sligochildcare.ie) under the Research & Development link.)

## HEALTHY EATING FOR THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS

### A Sligo & Leitrim County Childcare Committee initiative

As a Parent or a Childcare Provider you have probably wondered, how to introduce healthy eating to young children? Well an initiative developed by Sligo and Leitrim County Childcare Committee and HSE West under the Early Years Health Promotion Project and funded by the Safe Food Programme, may have the answer for you! In consultation with parents, children and childcare providers, an activity book has been designed with the specific aim of promoting Healthy Eating, Oral health and Outdoor Play for 3-5 year olds.

The activity book is a colourful, interesting and educational resource which provides a different activity to encourage learning on all aspects of healthy eating, hygiene and oral health. The different topics covered include, proteins, portion size, fruit & vegetables, dairy foods, energy, tooth decay, the way we brush our teeth and the all important food pyramid. Children can now learn about healthy eating, hygiene and brushing their teeth in a fun way, with activities that involve colouring, drawing, spotting the odd one out, matching like with like and two songs.

Under the Early Years Health Promotion Project the activity book has been supplied to the childcare providers across Sligo and Leitrim who participate in the project. In fact the activity book is just one resource which has been developed by the Early Years Health Promotion Project since commencing in 2004.

If you would like further information on the Early Years Health Promotion Project please contact Leitrim County Childcare Committee on (071) 9640870 or Sligo County Childcare Committee on (071) 9148860. A copy of the Activity Book for three to five year olds is available for download at [www.leitrimchildcare.ie](http://www.leitrimchildcare.ie) or [www.sligochildcare.ie](http://www.sligochildcare.ie)



## CERTIFICATE IN NUTRITION

### Food preparation and culinary skills for childcare service providers (Level 7)



Commencing September 2009, this one year part time level 7 certificate course will be delivered by St. Angela's College, Sligo and accredited by the National University of Ireland, Galway. The Certificate in Nutrition, Food Preparation & Culinary Skills is designed to meet the needs of personnel working in childcare settings who wish to obtain a formal qualification in this area. Participants will gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of practical culinary skills taking cognizance of nutrition, health & food safety management. In addition to investigating recent health strategies and evaluating good practice at local and international level, participants will also explore the concepts of food hygiene and safety.

The Certificate in Nutrition, Food Preparation & Culinary Skills consists of 3 core modules:

- Nutrition for Pre school children
- Food Safety & Hygiene
- Food Preparation & Culinary Skills

For further details please contact:  
[sheilaryan@sligochildcare.ie](mailto:sheilaryan@sligochildcare.ie)

## STUDENT PLACEMENTS

by Sandra Hora and Christina Hennigan

When we told anyone about our placement in Sligo County Childcare Committee, they all had the same response – "But will you not miss the children?" Of course we would! We love working directly with children but there was another area of work in the Childcare sector that appealed to us as well.

We're both third year students in the BA in Early Childhood Care and Education in IT Sligo and during the first semester of this year we were introduced to the subject - Community and Voluntary Sector. As part of this subject we were taught the methods for carrying out a community needs analysis, how to support community development and all about the agencies active in this field. This provided inspiration for future career prospects which we hadn't really thought of before.

These included jobs in the area of research and development. It was also the biggest incentive to apply for our placement in the County Childcare Committee in Sligo Town. We knew this placement would allow us to see the theory we had learned in the community and voluntary sector being put to practice. Any knowledge we previously had in this sector has been strengthened and our employment choices have definitely been extended since we started work here. We have been able to visit so many different settings and have been exposed to so much training while we've been here. We've also had the opportunity to carry out evaluations on different areas within the Early Years Health Promotion Project and the Pre-school Transition Programme. We know this experience is invaluable.

Information we had learned from studying law, policy studies and communications has also been incredibly useful whilst on this placement.



*We would both like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely the childcare services involved in the evaluations which we undertook for the Pre-School Transition Programme and the Early Years Health Promotion Project. The co-operation which we experienced made our jobs very easy indeed and we appreciated this very much.*

Sandra Christina