

Sligo County Childcare Committee



A word from Sharon

It's coming to the end of another very successful ECCE year for our Early Years Professionals in County Sligo, your ECCE children will be heading off to the next big milestone in their lives transitioning to school. I am sure you have all been supporting them and their parents with this transition if you need any of our ready for school leaflets please just let us know. We wish all the ECCE 2014/15 year the very best of good luck with their next big adventure.

As you will see from this newsletter you have all been busy attending training and development programmes and we appreciate all your input into these programmes. The capital programme 2015 is open until the 28th May so make sure you look up the various strands in particular strand 4 where you can avail of funding in order to update your IT equipment, with the online processes of PIP it is vitally important that you have a scanner so maybe have a little look at the funding support you can get for these types of equipment.

On behalf of Sligo County Childcare Committee thanks for all your support and help- over the last few months.

Sharon

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MINISTER REILLY'S VISIT

Sligo County Childcare Committee were very fortunate to have a visit recently by Minister James Reilly, Minister Reilly spoke about the valuable work undertaken by the Early Years professionals and noted the quality of early years provision that he was lucky to visit on his travels. He also spoke of the need to ensure the parents voice in decisions relating to early years care and education provision, he encouraged parents to have their say and that he wanted to hear directly

from them through the online consultation regarding early years supports. <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=3442> While visiting Sligo the Minister also opened the new premises of Learn Early in Ballymote



Recent PIP Training @ Pobal

A few points came up at recent training SCCC staff attended and we would like to draw your attention to them!

Parents on disability/Illness/Occupational Injury benefit will be reviewed during the course of the academic year (DB Review). If the relevant Benefit no longer applies at the review, the band will be amended accordingly. Therefore the onus is on the Service to monitor the situation and make sure the Parent is on the correct band for CCS. This is noted on the DCYA website underneath the CCS Band table.

Compliance Visits:

It has been noted that ECCE Calendars and letters are displayed in Services but a lot of services are not displaying CCS Calendars and letters. Please remember **ALL** Calendars and Letters are to be displayed!

A calendar of ALL payments is available for Services on DCYA Website. This gives the date and type of payment. e.g. CCS and TEC and ECCE. Please use this calendar to help figure out which programme your income has come from.

Fees policies submitted via PIP



7 things about Fees Policies, Calendars, Contracts, New Contracts & CCS:

1. Fees policies/calendars will be administered via PIP commencing on the 18th May 2015. Services will log into PIP, download the form, complete it and then re-attach (or scan and re-attach if they've printed it off), this will ping back to Sligo CCC, who will read and either accept/decline. If Sligo CCC declines, they will leave an explanatory note and the service will re-submit a revised document in the same fashion and back and forth that will go (all within PIP) until Sligo CCC is happy that they are correct at which point Sligo CCC will accept the documents and PIP will superimpose a 'watermark' on the approved version. The service can print off and place on the wall of the Service.
2. Services will have until the 31st of July to submit the above. Please don't leave it until end of July to complete.
3. There are no changes to the calendar/fees policy/letter formats to previous years.
4. Commencing the above process will be taken as a signal of 're-entry' into the schemes (i.e. in place of a formal 're-contracting') as last year's contracts ran for 2 years.
5. New entrants to the scheme will be administered in the old system, which is currently available.
6. It is likely that services will be able to start registering children for September 2015 from July.
7. Services are likely to be paid a 2/3 week front loaded payment this year. They will be paid on the actual number of children registered and so on as the year progresses, cutting down on overpayments.

Critical Incident Preparedness

Whether you attended the Critical Incident training in February last or two years ago, it may be timely to take some time out to review your preparedness in relation to critical incidents - While specific emergency preparedness plans will have individual features, there will be many common requirements and every service should, as a minimum, have the following as standard:

- Current list of staff members' names, addresses and contact details for staff and next of kin;
- A current list of children including special needs requirements;
- An attendance log book;
- A current list of parents and second named guardian including contact details;
- Adequate first aid resources and a current list of staff with first aid training;
- A quick reference guide with contact details for the Critical Incident Team and essential services: (Appendix B of your resource manual)
- A clearly defined evacuation procedure which identifies pre-designated assembly areas and if required, a relocation shelter site:
- An evacuation bag (for suggested contents see Appendix C of your resource Manual)
- Up to date facility floor plans and maps outlining fire exits and location of essential services;
- Templates for communications with parents and the media
- Contact details for interpretive services if required;
- Maintaining a soft copy file of children's photographs, with parental consent, should be considered.

Emergency situations identified during risk assessment as being high risk to the facility should have a specific plan developed. These plans should be concise and consistent in their layout and format and should be in addition to organisation policies and procedures required by laws and regulation.

Each plan should identify:

The hazards – list the dangers should this emergency arise;

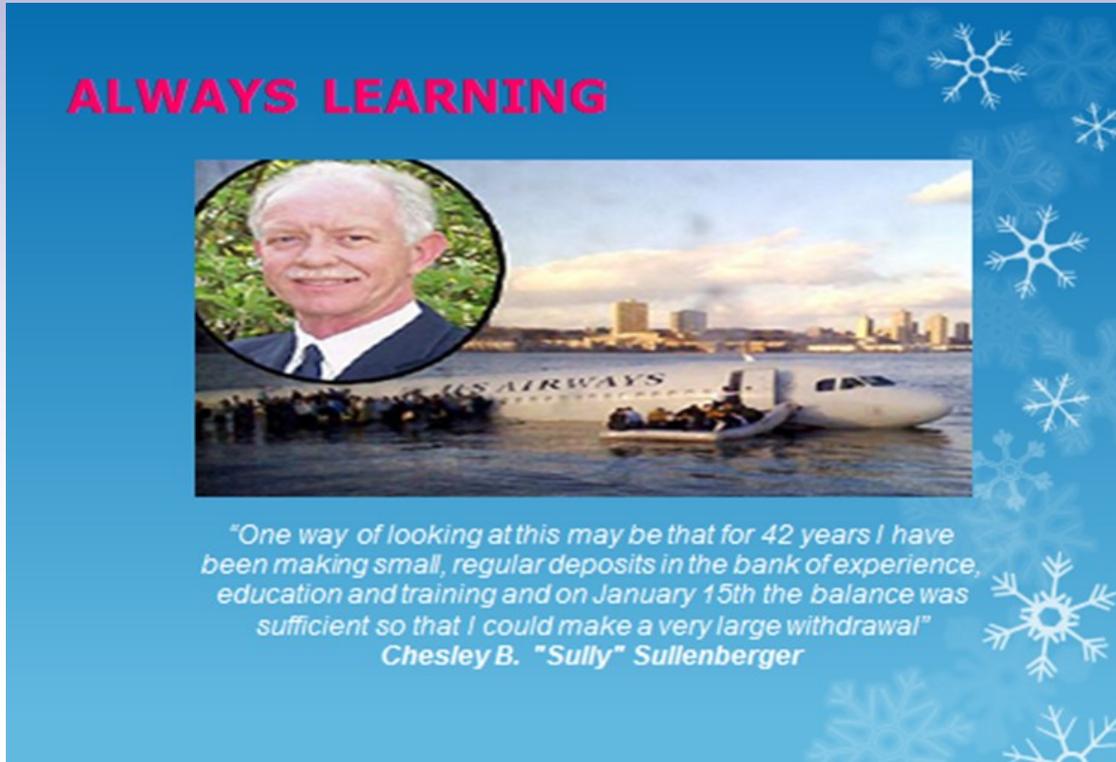
Preparedness – identify the measures in place to prevent this happening

Response – include the specific actions required with relevant contact details included;

4 Recovery – outline the actions to be taken for recovery.

Any service who would like guidance or assistance in developing their plans should feel free to contact any member of the development team here in the CC

And to finish - in the words of Chesley B. Sullenberger -



Reference - County Childcare Committee. *Critical Incident Plan Toolkit for Childcare Providers.*

While we all know that children are surrounded by injury risks, the good news is that most unintentional injuries (accidents) can be prevented.

With this in mind, the Department of Public Health in the Midlands has developed webpages which aim to raise awareness of injury risks and offer advice which will help to keep children safe.

The pages are intended for use by all who care, in any capacity, for children.

Please have a look at our pages - www.hse.ie/childsafety



Have you been asking yourself **who or what are Better Start ? What does Better Start do ?** Through this short piece, we hope to answer some of these questions for you.

Better Start National Early Years Quality Development is a national initiative established by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in collaboration with the Early Years Education Policy Unit in the Department of Education and Skills (DES). It is hosted by Pobal on behalf of DCYA. This initiative has been developed to ensure a co-ordinated approach to quality in the early years sector in Ireland within the wide range of supports which already exist such as the City and County Childcare Committees and Voluntary Childcare Organisations.

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The work of **Better Start** will be underpinned by Siolta – the National Quality Framework and Aistear – our National Curriculum Framework. Better Start will work collaboratively with all stakeholders through provision of support for the sector to ensure that the children in our services receive the best quality care and seek to promote positive outcomes for children.

The Quality Development Service within **Better Start** will support services to develop quality within their service through their Early Years specialists. These specialists will work in a mentoring and advisory capacity within a range of methods which will complement other quality supports such as training, Continuing Professional Development programmes, and other individual or team-based development work provided by other organisations such as City and County Childcare Committees or the Voluntary Childcare organisations.

The Early Years Specialists are qualified professionals (Level 8/9) with a wealth of knowledge and practice experience. The service will operate on a national, rather than regional or county basis and requests for the service will be initiated by the City and County Childcare Committees. Initially Better Start will focus on full day care services with 40 or more children in the age range birth to 6 years. The service is free of charge, flexible and will adapt to work within the demands and routines of a busy early years service.

Criteria for a request may include:

- “A commitment and willingness by an Early Childhood Education and Care service to undertake quality development;
- An area of quality development identified through statutory inspection reports;
- A direct request by an Early Years Service provider for a mentor through their local City and County Childcare Committee;

Services which have had limited opportunities to participate in quality development.”

<https://www.pobal.ie/BetterStart/Pages/WhatWeDo.aspx>

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in Practice Stage 1

Due to high levels of demand, Spring/Summer 2015 has seen the roll out of Aistear in Practice Stage 1 for a sixth time. We had 22 participants who dedicated their time over the four nights, shared their knowledge and experiences with each other and enhanced the delivery of the programme. **"Thank You"** to Holy Family Pre-school for opening their doors and hosting all four sessions, all of the participants and a special thank you to our guest speakers.



We invite all services who have participated in both stage 1 and 2 to e-mail any examples of "Gem" moments you have experienced in your service or changes you have made as a result of Aistear in Practice!



We invite all Aistear in Practice Stage 2 Participants to access

<http://action.ncca.ie/resource/The-learning-environment/50>



In Practice Stage 2

The start of this year has seen 1 group progress through Aistear in Practice Stage 2. this gave opportunities for participants to gain a deeper knowledge of Aistear, take examples from some very knowledgeable speakers and learn from each other **"Thank You"** and well done to everyone who took part, a number of services hosted an Aistear session and many others shared evidence of their practices.



AistearSiolta Practice Guide

The **AistearSiolta** Practice Guide is now accessible at www.aistearsiolta.ie. This brings Aistear the National Curriculum Framework and Siolta the National Quality Framework together under the title of curriculum. The Practice Guide is a curriculum tool for services working with Children between the ages of zero and six. It is specifically designed for Full Day Care and Sessional Services. **AistearSiolta** provides a very interactive means of helping the service and practitioners develop an inquiry based and emerging curriculum. This is achieved by encouraging users to reflect on their existing curriculum and build upon it. **AistearSiolta** can also be used by new services starting to develop their curriculum.

The Practice Guide initially addresses four core curriculum foundations:

Element 1 - Developing Your Curriculum and Curriculum Statement,

Element 2 – Principles Including Rights of the Child and Practitioner Image of the Child,

Element 3 - Themes

Element Four - Professional Practice.

It then follows on to address six pillars of practice including: Building Partnerships with Parents, Creating and Using the Learning Environment, Learning Through Play, Nurturing and Extending Interactions, Planning and Assessing Using Aistears Themes and Supporting Transitions.



The website utilises many tip sheets, videos and podcasts from the Aistear resources and you will also be able to identify familiar aspects of Siolta throughout the text. Currently some aspects of the Guide/Website are still being finalised therefore you may notice changes over time and we expect that the guide will expand over time. Practitioners and services are welcome to use the guide and become familiar with it at their own ease at any time. We would recommend that new users to the Practice Guide read the Introduction Manual before starting to explore other areas of the website.

CCS Transfers

Please be aware if a child who is CCS funded is transferring to TEC, the funding for this child has to be released. A child can not be receiving funding twice. If a child is leaving CCS for some other reason then funding can be kept. It's then up to the service to keep note as to what CCS availability they have to offer another child.

CAPITAL FUNDING

The announcement of the Early Years Capital Funding was one which was very much welcomed by all services. Please make sure that you read the guidelines which you can find on the PIP system before you make your application.



Don't forget about our library here in our offices, anyone needing any information for projects or anyone completing modules for their L5 or L6 under the learner fund we have Fetac books and our development officers Joan and Viola and quality worker Nicola would be more than happy to point you in the right direction.

ECCE LEAVERS

Key points for ECCE service providers to note

- Every time a parent notifies that their child will be leaving, it is the responsibility of the service provider to log on to the PIP portal and submit an ECCE Leaver Form by editing the original registration (see also how to guide).
- Please click on the following link to access the PIP homepage.
<https://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EarlyEducationandChildcare/Pages/PIP.aspx>.

Links to the PIP portal and the How to Guide are located on the right hand side of this page.

- Having logged on through the portal the procedure is as follows:
 - **Select Edit Registration, Select Registration Change and then Select Leaver and process accordingly. Submit the completed Leaver and print off the 'Child Leaving ECCE' Parent Declaration form.**
- One copy of the **'Child Leaving ECCE' Parent Declaration form** should be given to the parent

to take to the new facility. All Service Providers are advised to ask parents who are transferring from another service for the 'Child Leaving ECCE' declaration. This declaration will inform the provider the date from which the registration will be eligible for ECCE funding **and** if the required four pre-school weeks' notice has been provided. If a child is starting in a new service and has not given notice to the original service, it is the responsibility of the new service to follow up with parents on the payment of pre-school fees for that 4 week period. The original service is also advised that a copy of the signed 'Child Leaving ECCE' Parent Declaration should be retained by them for compliance purposes.

- **Please note leaver forms must not be submitted to DCYA or Pobal. If you experience difficulties/errors with the on-line leaver process, please contact the on-line support help desk to discuss.**

Payment dates for all programmes¹¹ can be accessed on the PIP home page



Music Generation

Music Generation is part of a national music education programme for children and young people which was initiated by Music Network, co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, The Department of Education and Skills and Sligo Music Education Partnership.

Many Early Years services have had the opportunity to have musicians visit their service in the last few years as part of this funded programme which has been supported through funding from SCCC. Currently SCCC have co funded Music Generation working in Holy Family school providing a series of facilitated music sessions. At these sessions children engage with music, play new instruments, learn and develop new skills such as listening, turn taking and social skills such as responding to their name.



Mary Mc Nasser from Holy Family School commented how all the children really enjoy the music sessions which takes place monthly. Mary explained of the journey of engagement children had made over the last few months with staff observing children's level of concentration and engagement increasing with each session.

Music Generation will continue to engage with Holy Family for the remainder of the year with plans currently taking place on sharing the experience of children with their parents and families.

Visit to Re-create



In March a bus funded by SCCC through the managers network took practitioners to Re-Create which is a national social enterprise that takes end of line and surplus stock from businesses and reuses them as arts materials. Materials available are wide ranging and include paper, wool, plastics, fabric, tubing, foam and many other unusual and unexpected surprises. This visit was organised through the Managers Network who meet every two months in SCCC.

The visit started with a workshop followed by practitioners choosing different materials to bring back to their services. One of the organisers of the trip was Jackie Mahon from Little People's Playworld Crèche who gave the following comment on the trip 'Both myself and my staff had a wonderful day at Re-Create. We got loads of ideas and can't wait to make some of them with our summer camp. When we came back and showed the children all we got their faces lit up. All the materials we took back are useful and the children have enjoyed using them and being creative. We are all looking forward to our next trip'.



Congratulations!

The Staff and Management at **Happy Days, Day Care**, were winners of their category and also overall winners in County Sligo Accessibility Awards

Learn Early Montessorri Academy and Creche, Ballymote held their official openion on April 20th 2015, which was attended by Minister Dr. James Reilly.

The staff and Management at **Benbulben Creche** and Montessorri received the Siolta Quality Service Award on the 9th May at the Siolta Showcase Seminar, Mayo.



Congrats and Well Done to all!

