



# Leitrim County Childcare Committee 5th Annual Children's Day

Leitrim County Childcare Committee hosted a Children's Day on Sunday the 27th June in the Leitrim Gaels Community Pitch, Leitrim Village. 210 people attended on the day and enjoyed all activities and events on the lovely sunny day that it was. The day included activities such as parent's races and children races, music workshops, hip hop dancing, arts & crafts, face painting, and Football skills. The interactive music workshops were facilitated by a band from Belfast "Beyond Skin". Beyond Skin aims to address racism, sectarianism and prejudice through the universal language of music and art. The day provided an opportunity for parents from different communities living in the area to meet. Leitrim County Childcare Committee organised an event for parents which was funded by the Peace III Programme through the European Union's Regional Development Fund which is managed by the Special EU Programme Body. The funding for this parents project is being administered by Leitrim Development Company.



Parents enjoying the multicultural drumming session as part of Parent Event organised in conjunction with the Children Day which was funded by Peace



Parents and Children enjoying participating with the "Beyond Skin" Band from Belfast



The Parents event was ran alongside Leitrim County Childcare Committees Children's Day. This project was funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan.

Opening the event Chairperson Paschal Mooney welcomed all the families who attended including new communities living in the area. Leitrim County Childcare Committee aim to address the childcare needs of families and promote access for all families to childcare services. To promote this a consultation with parents took place on the day on their 'Vision for childcare and education for 2020'.

## STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Manager  
 Aedamar Keenan

Childcare Support & Development Worker  
 Nicola Reynolds

Childcare & Family Support Worker  
 Fidelma Durkin

Childminding Advisory Worker  
 Orla McKeon

Early Years Health Promotion Project Worker  
 Grainne Kelly

Administrator  
 Jennifer Scott

Part Time Administrator  
 Mary Doran

Office Contact Details  
 Leitrim County Childcare Committee,  
 Laird House,  
 Church Street  
 Drumshanbo,  
 Co. Leitrim

Tel: 0719640870  
 Fax: 0719640871  
 Email: info@leitrimchildcare.ie  
 Web: www.leitrimchildcare.ie

Some comments from the consultation included;

- 'more outdoor learning'
- 'more play based early education'
- 'Siolta and Aistear being supported with funding from the government 'that children are listened to and have a voice as to what they want in a play school setting all children should have an opportunity to attend a crèche or preschool to benefit the child on all the developmental levels' free preschool year is an excellent idea for parents who would never think of sending their child to a preschool; this encourages them to do so and helps the child also'
- 'flexibility of care available'.

This information gathered has been forwarded to 'Start Strong' who are developing a shared vision for the future of children's early care and education in Ireland with the aim of feeding this into government policy.



Children preparing for the races

A consultation with children was carried out through the childcare services where the children were asked to draw and describe 'Their Perfect Outing' and Paschal complimented the 89 children who took part in the consultation and thanked the services involved. Children from services all over the county drew pictures of their perfect outing with the support of the childcare services. All good ideas for summer scheme outings. We have a selection of wonderful examples such as;

- 'playing in the rain',
- 'going to the zoo and the beach'
- 'having a picnic in the park'
- 'trip to the organic centre to see lots of flowers'
- 'putting in the cattle in Uncle Michael's farm'.

A host of activities on Sunday included a baby corner, races for all ages, egg and spoon races, hip-hop dancing, mask making and portraits in arts and crafts. Children also enjoyed face painting and football skills. The Order of Malta was available for assistance during the day. The Children's Day was provided free of charge to parents and children and was enjoyed thoroughly by all who attended. Leitrim County Childcare Committee hosted its annual Fathers and Children's Activity Day in The Bee Park Manorhamilton on Saturday the 15th



Children participating in Hip Hop dancing session

## Fathers and Children's Day:

May. The day included indoor and outdoor games before lunch and cookery demonstration in the afternoon which gave everyone an opportunity to get involved in preparing and tasting foods and drinks.

Fathers and children assisted the chef in making smoothies, pizza, baked potatoes and many more delicious dishes. The day was great fun and enjoyed by all who attended.



Fathers and Children enjoying the cookery demonstration



Fathers and Children enjoying the indoor and outdoor games

## Barnardos Training:

Leitrim Childcare Committee in Partnership with Barnardos will run a Parenting Teenagers Course in Carrick on Shannon starting Monday the 6th of September. The course will consist of six sessions scheduled for the dates below Mondays-6th, 13th and 20th of September and the 4th, 11th and 18th of November from 7pm to 9pm each evening. The course will cover a number of topics relating to your teenager including the list below:

- Understanding what is going on for a teenagers within and outside the home
- Listening and communicating effectively
- Family decision making (involving teens in these)
- Understanding development in the teens years (physical, social, emotional cognitive)

Please contact the office to book as places are limited.

## After school Training:

In order to support After school services and After school workers in the County Leitrim County Childcare Committee has provided two training workshops for After school workers so far this year. In April an evening workshop on Healthy Eating and Snacks for After schools was held in Drumshanbo and on a sunny Saturday in June after school workers from throughout the County attended a day on activities and ideas for Summer Camps. The next workshop for After school Childcare Workers will take place in Drumshanbo in early October on ideas for your Halloween camp. The training will include arts and craft ideas for children and young people aged 4- 12 years. If you are interested in booking a place and for further information please contact Fidelma at the Leitrim County Childcare Committee Office.

## Early Years Update!

### Nature workshops:

As part of our continuing promotion of outdoor play, 6 services on the project received nature and wildlife workshops entitled "Hands on Nature" from Rosiland Wickham. Children from Dromahair Playgroup, Drumkeerin Childcare, Tullaghan Playgroup, Kinlough Pre-school, Cloone Playgroup and Gortletteragh Playgroup learned about different flowers and bugs in nature and went on a bug hunt in their own garden. They found ladybirds, centipedes, snails, worms and even a frog! This not only promoted outdoor play but it also allowed children to explore their outdoor areas and familiarise themselves with the different bugs.



Dromahair children on a bug hunt



Children from Dromahair investigating the bugs a little closer

## Start coming to Leitrim:

Leitrim Sports Partnership, an initiative of the Irish Sports Partnership has been established to increase the number of people involved in sport or physical activity in Leitrim. They will be rolling out a physical activity programme called Buntús Start for pre-school children in the coming months. This will compliment Action Kids, the physical activity programme which services are already implementing in County Leitrim. Buntús training will be made available to all pre-schools in the county. More information will follow in relation to this when it becomes available. Leitrim Sports Partnership can be contacted on 071-9650498.

## Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Booklet:

The Summer Scheme Booklet is being reprinted at the moment. Copies will be available for all services to give them ideas of activities for children and healthy recipes that can be prepared in services.

## Birth-3 year olds:

The Early Years Health Promotion Project will begin to work with more services that have children ages birth-3 years from September. Physical activity, outdoor play and healthy eating are extremely important for children of this age. A birth-3 year old activity manual has been developed by the Leitrim County Childcare Committee and is available for all services in the county. Project worker will use this manual to promote physical activity and develop a programme from it for the services. Services who are interested in becoming part of this project can call Gráinne, Early Years Health Promotion Worker.

## Childminders Update!

### Designated Persons Childminders Update

This training has been specifically designed for Childminders and as you work alone it is essential that you avail of this important training! The training will be delivered by Noreen Herron, Child Protection Officer, HSE and attended by Mary Kellegher-Egan, Social Work Team Leader for Co. Leitrim and the Pre-School Inspection Team in the Autumn.

This training is free of charge please contact the office to have your name added to the waiting list.

### Road Safety Authority (RSA) Training - "Simon and Friends"

This is a wonderfully simple child friendly programme that has been specifically designed for Pre-school children focusing on road safety. The full programme will be delivered in 2011 but for those of you wish to start the programme this year the training will start at the next Childminders Coffee morning in Fenagh on Tuesday 7th September from 11:00am to 13:30pm

Those who participate in the training will receive a resource pack which includes 4 books and a CD also a separate Teachers Guide called "Hand-in-hand" and you and the children in your care will be able to participate in Beep Beep Day in conjunction with National Safety Week in October!

### Childminding Quality Awareness Programme (CMQAP)

Dates have been set for the next Childminding Quality Awareness Saturday 11th and 25th September which will take place in the Food Hub Drumshanbo from 11:00am to 4:00pm at a cost of €35.

### Childminders and Families Christmas Event

The date has been set for what has now become an annual event. The fourth Childminders Christmas Event will take place on Sunday 28th November in the Ramada Hotel, Drumshanbo. I would welcome any ideas and suggestions for the day, please put the date in your diary and let your families know.

## Childminders Development Grant

If you have not already applied for a Childminding Development Grant I would advise you to do so or if you applied for a grant in 2008 you can re-apply again this year

The Childminders Development Grant is designed to assist Childminders, already providing a Childminding service in their own homes, to enhance safety/quality in the service through the purchase of small capital items, equipment, toys or minor adaptation costs. It may also give financial assistance to new or prospective Childminders with their initial set up costs. The maximum grant available is €1,000.

## National Guidelines for Childminders: Voluntary Notification

As a Childminder if you are minding 3 or less children you now have the opportunity to voluntarily notify that a service is being provided and can do so by contacting your Childminding Advisory Worker at Leitrim County Childcare Committee.

## Upcoming events

### Tuesday 7th September

Coffee Morning: 11am to 1.30pm, Fenagh Visitor's Centre and Soft Play Area

\* A light lunch will be provided and ALL are welcome!!!!

### Saturday 4th and 18th September

Childminding Quality Awareness Programme (CMQAP): 10 to 4pm, The Food Hub, Drumshanbo, Cost €35 per person

### Wednesday 15th September

Coffee Morning: 10.30 to 12.30pm, Happy Days Children's Adventure Centre, Sligo

\* A light lunch will be provided and ALL are welcome!!!!

### Wednesday 15th September

Siolta Network - "Rights of the Child" - Standard 1, Ramada Hotel, 7 to 9.30pm

### Tuesday 28th September

Designated Persons Training Ramada Hotel, Drumshanbo 7 to 9pm

## Siolta Training Update

Two Siolta Networks have taken place so far this year. The first took place on the 19th of April and explored Standard 1: Rights of the Child, looking at the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the importance of children's participation and contribution and children as citizens. The second meeting which focused on Standard 13: Transitions was held on the 15th of June and looked at universal transitions experienced by children, facilitating successful transitions for children and the importance of play in transitions. Both networks were facilitated by Michelle Hart, Siolta Co-ordinator with the Border Counties Childcare Network. To date 34 childcare services throughout Leitrim are engaging with the Siolta programme with 148 childcare practitioners attending Siolta networks. Each of these Siolta Networks was followed by a training event linked specifically to the Standard that was focused on. Following the Rights of the Child network, Michelle Hart from the BCCN facilitated a seminar on Consulting with Children which explored a history and reasons why we should consult with children, the image of the child and implications for practice, considering the pedagogy of listening – meaning hearing, sharing power with children, the mosaic approach and challenges in listening to children. The Siolta Network which looked at Transitions was followed by a workshop on The Pre-school Transition Programme which was facilitated by Canavan and Byrne. In addition Leitrim County Childcare Committee held a Practical Workshop on Siolta – Getting Started on the 1st of June for childcare staff and

voluntary committee members. This workshop gave childcare practitioners the opportunity to highlight the advantages of the introduction of a national quality programme within the childcare sector and discuss any challenges encountered with the programme. The next Siolta Network will take place on the 21st of September in The Ramada Hotel, Drumshanbo and will focus on Standard 2: Environments. This will be followed by a Network on the 16th of November which will explore Standard 7: Curriculum.



Fidelma Durkin, Childcare & Family Support Worker, LCCC, Sheila N Dorange & Marianne Kiltubrid Childcare Services, Tina Gallogly Happy Feet Childcare Carrigallen, Nicola Reynolds Childcare Support & Development Worker LCCC, Michelle Harte Siolta Co-ordinator, Aedamar Keenan Manager LCCC

## Siolta Workshop "Rights of the Child" - Standard 1

For those of you who didn't have the opportunity to attend this awareness raising workshop earlier this year this will be your last chance to avail of this pivotal to the overall Siolta Programme, if you have not attended this workshop you will not be able to join the Siolta Programme which will be rolling out in the county over the coming years. This workshop will take place Wednesday 15th September 7 to 9.30pm in the Ramada Hotel. We would particularly encourage all managers of services to attend.

## Siolta Workshop "Environments" - Standard

Will take place Tuesday 21st September details to follow

## Siolta Network "Environments"

Will take place Tuesday 12th October details to follow

## Pre-school Transition Programme

The Siolta Network which looked at Transitions was followed by a workshop on The Pre-school Transition Programme which was facilitated by Canavan and Byrne. At this workshop preschool practitioners received a pre-school workbook called "All About Me" for each preschool child attending their service in September. It is an activity book using the building blocks of self esteem; identity, belonging, purpose and competence. The objective of the book is that it can be used as a developmental tool to build self-esteem, to identify the strengths, to highlight where support or extra help may be required and to be shared with the infant teacher.

The "All About Me" workbook contains activities around areas of identity and belonging, expressing feelings, identifying and teaching abilities and to help with pre-reading and pre-writing skills. This workbook will be used by children together with practitioners, parents and primary school teachers.



## Respecting Difference

13 childcare services completed the Respecting Difference Media Initiative Training Programme this year. The programme is a pre-school project aimed at helping young children to develop positive attitudes to diversity. The programme was developed and is ran by Early Years-the Organisation for Young Children and delivers mutual understanding and diversity training and resource packs for practitioners, teachers, parents and pre-school management committees across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. The programme uses cartoons and interactive play materials to help young children understand and respect those who are different and encourage inclusion in a very simple child-friendly way.

As part of the programme practitioners receive training, support visits from an Early Years Specialist, in addition to parent engagement workshops and management support and training sessions. Well done to the following services who completed the training this year; Tiny Toppers Pre-school Playgroup, Kinlough Childcare Ltd, Little Stars Nursery, Bright Buttons Day Nursery & Afterschool, Sunflower Montessori School, Lollipop Kids Community Playgroup, Eivers Lane Childcare Centre, Dowra Community Pre-school, Tiny Hearts Creche, Cloone/Aughavas Community Playgroup, Annaduff Community Childcare Ltd, Aghnasheelin Childcare Group Ltd and Fenagh Community Playgroup. Leitrim County Childcare Committee will be facilitating additional services to participate in the training in September. If you would like any further information on the programme please contact Nicola in the office.

## Childcare Workers Panel

Leitrim County Childcare Committee has formed the Leitrim Childcare Workers Panel. It is intended that the Panel will be available to all childcare services to provide cover for holidays, sick leave or occasional unforeseen emergencies. We hope that this will be a valuable resource for Childcare Services who are often in a position where they must take on relief workers at short notice. The Relief Panel of Childcare Workers will provide access to qualified staff to ensure that services are complying with the Childcare (Pre-school) Regulations 2006 with regard to adult/child ratios.

The Panel provides Childcare Services with a list of qualified workers available to work on a relief basis. It is the responsibility of the Childcare Provider as the employer to follow their normal recruitment procedures in employing the Panel Member. This will include checking references and Garda Vetting. The Panel has been verified by the HSE through Leitrim County Childcare Committee as recommended. If you would like a copy of the Panel or if you wish to apply to be included on the Panel please contact the office.

## Tutor List

Leitrim County Childcare Committee is compiling a database of tutors which will be used when planning events/workshops/information sessions for parents, childcare providers and children. We are inviting anyone with tutoring skills or who has experience facilitating workshops or sessions to submit their information. Tutors may have skills in a variety of areas such as FETAC childcare courses, dance/music workshops, arts and crafts, physical activity, cookery or other areas of interest for adults and children. Please forward your CV detailing your qualifications and experience to our office.

## ECCE & CCS Scheme - Update for Childcare Providers 2010

In January 2010 the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme commenced. The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) has responsibility for implementing this scheme which will bring together a number of elements for participating ECCE services as follows:

- The implementation of Siolta - The National Quality Framework
- The assessment tool for Regulation 5 of the Pre School Regulations (2006)
- Publication of Aistear the National Curriculum Framework

The introduction of a follow on scheme to the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) with effect from 1 Sept 2010 was announced in the budget in Dec 2009. The new Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) scheme will continue to be available to community not-for-profit childcare services only and will also be implemented by the OMCYA. From Sept 2010 the CCS scheme will contain the following provisions:

### Band A

- Parents will continue to qualify for band A subvention where they are in receipt of a social welfare payment
- Parents in receipt of Family Income Supplement will also qualify for Band A subvention
- Parents in this category must be provided with a weekly fee reduction of €100 in the case of full day care, €50 in the case of part time services, €33 in the case of a sessional service and €16 in the case of shorter hours service.
- In the case of a child referred by the HSE, subvention will be increased to the Band A rate
- Band A parents in receipt of Job Seekers Benefit will qualify for subvented child care for part time, sessional or shorter hour services only, but not in respect of full time services.

### Band B

- Parents will qualify as Band B where they hold a medical card or a GP visit card.
- Parents in this category must be provided with weekly fee reduction of €50 in the case of a full time service, €25 in the case of a part time service, €17 in the case of a sessional service and €8.50 in the case of a shorter hours service.
- Subvention rate of €50 will apply to low income working parents e.g. holders of a medical or GP visit card.
- Parents verified by OMCYA as Band A in the previous year's return but who would no longer be eligible for subvention may also attract subvention at this rate

## ECCE-Providing Clarity for Parents

We suggest that in the case of a 38 week option services circulate the calendar to parents outlining the specific weeks you will be closed for midterms/annual holidays throughout the year. These weeks can coincide with your local primary schools closing dates. If you choose to operate a non-ECCE programme throughout mid-term/annual holidays, parents should be notified of this arrangement at the start of the year and understand that this is an optional extra. All costs associated with your childcare service must be outlined on your Fees Payment Policy. To enter the ECCE scheme for September 2010 children must be born between 2nd February 2006 and 30th June 2007. To enter the ECCE scheme for September 2011 children must be born between 2nd February 2007 and 30th June 2008. Services should advise parents who wish to enroll or transfer their child for the scheme in January 2011 to complete a parental declaration form for return to OMCYA, no later than 12th November 2010. Funding for transfer children will only be given to services at the beginning of each payment term once required details are provided to OMCYA in timeframe given.

Parents should be made aware of the early educational focus of the ECCE scheme and the specific care and education programme your service has in place. This can be done through information evenings, parent's handbook and notice boards. Services are advised to record children's attendance on a daily basis and deal promptly and appropriately with regular absenteeism for compliance purposes.

## Children with Special Needs and the ECCE Scheme

The ECCE makes a number of provisions to facilitate children with disabilities and special needs:

- The upper age limit is waived where children have been assessed as being developmentally delayed or where they have a physical, sensory or mental condition which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age.
- Provision is also made to enable children who have been assessed as having a disability, and who would benefit from attending pre-school for 2/3 days rather than 5 days each week, to be eligible over 2 years e.g. 2 days in year 1 and 3 days in year 2.
- To avoid delays for parents; in addition to HSE assessments for children with special needs and/or disabilities, assessments provided by the treating consultant can be accepted as evidence of developmental delay and/or disability.
- Where children have been assessed as having a disability which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age, the provision of a 2nd free pre-school year; on a non pro-rata basis, will be considered where this will be of particular benefit to the child.
- Parents of children who have availed of the free pre-school year in January 2010 and have an assessed disability which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age, should apply to the OMCYA where they wish their child to be considered for a 2nd pre-school year in September 2010. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.
- The OMCYA is seeking the views of the Working Group established by the Office of Disabilities and Mental Health to examine the co-ordination of State supports for children with special needs/disabilities.

## The new Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) Scheme

This scheme will come into effect from the 1st of September 2010 and will combine the existing childcare support payments for qualifying for FAS and VEC trainees into one capitation system providing free childcare places. The scheme was open to private and community day care services which are participating in the ECCE and/or the CCS, as well as afterschool services for primary school children which are in the CCS. A small number of CETS childcare places will be available within ten services in the county.

## Road Safety Education at Preschool Level

The Road Safety Authority is rolling out a Road Safety Education Programme for Preschool Services. The programme is called the Simon and Friends Series which reinforces 4 key messages in road safety;

holding hands, stopping, following a good example and look and listen. Each message is accompanied by a story book, songs and activities. The programme was originally produced in Manchester and adopted for use in Ireland by the RSA. The resources were piloted in Counties Mayo, Galway, South Dublin, Longford and South Tipperary and feedback was excellent. The programme is supported by the OMCYA and can be linked to Standard 9: Health and Welfare of the Síolta Programme.



Each participating preschool service receives a pack containing the story books and a CD on which all the stories have been recorded together with a number of road safety songs and a short road safety game. They will also receive a separate 'Teachers Guide' called "Hand-in-Hand" and contains contacts for providers, games and activities to accompany stories, certificates for the children and tips on how to practice the road safety messages in the story book. Leitrim County Childcare Committee will be offering this training to childcare services early next year so keep an eye on our mailings for further details.

## Child Protection Training Update

Child Protection Training took place on the 23rd & 24th April, facilitated by Anne McGuinness, 12 childcare practitioners completed the training. A second course took place on the 15th and 22nd of May, facilitated by Sile Donohue, 15 childcare practitioners completed the training. Manual Handling Training took place on the 9th of June, 14 people participated in the training.

Designated Persons Training took place on the 27th of April and was run jointly by the HSE Preschool Inspection Team and Leitrim County Childcare Committee. Designated Child Protection Persons from preschool and afterschool services were invited to attend. Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health & Childcare, 1999, Section 6.7.2) advises that all organisation providing services to children should have a designated person who would act as a resource to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns and should be responsible for reporting allegations or concerns to the HSE or An Garda Síochána. At the workshop participants will receive a Child Protection Policy Template and had the opportunity to meet with the local Inspection Team and the Social Work Department. This was an invaluable piece of training for all who attended and feedback from the event was very positive.

## Funding of €41,965 distributed Countywide

Leitrim County Childcare Committee in co-operation with the HSE, have approved grants to 46 community childcare services across the county totally €41,965.

A number of childcare groups are supported by the Leitrim County Childcare Committee in providing a wide variety of services such as Full Day Care, Playgroup, After-school, Drop in Care, Summer Schemes and Childminding in the home. The following grants that were approved to date are:

### HSE Quality and Standards Grants:

18 services received various amounts totally to €29500

### Parent and Toddler Grants:

11 groups received grants totally €2750

### Summer Scheme Grants:

17 schemes received grants totally €5715

### Childminders Development Grants:

4 Childminders received grants totally €4000

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2007 - 2013

